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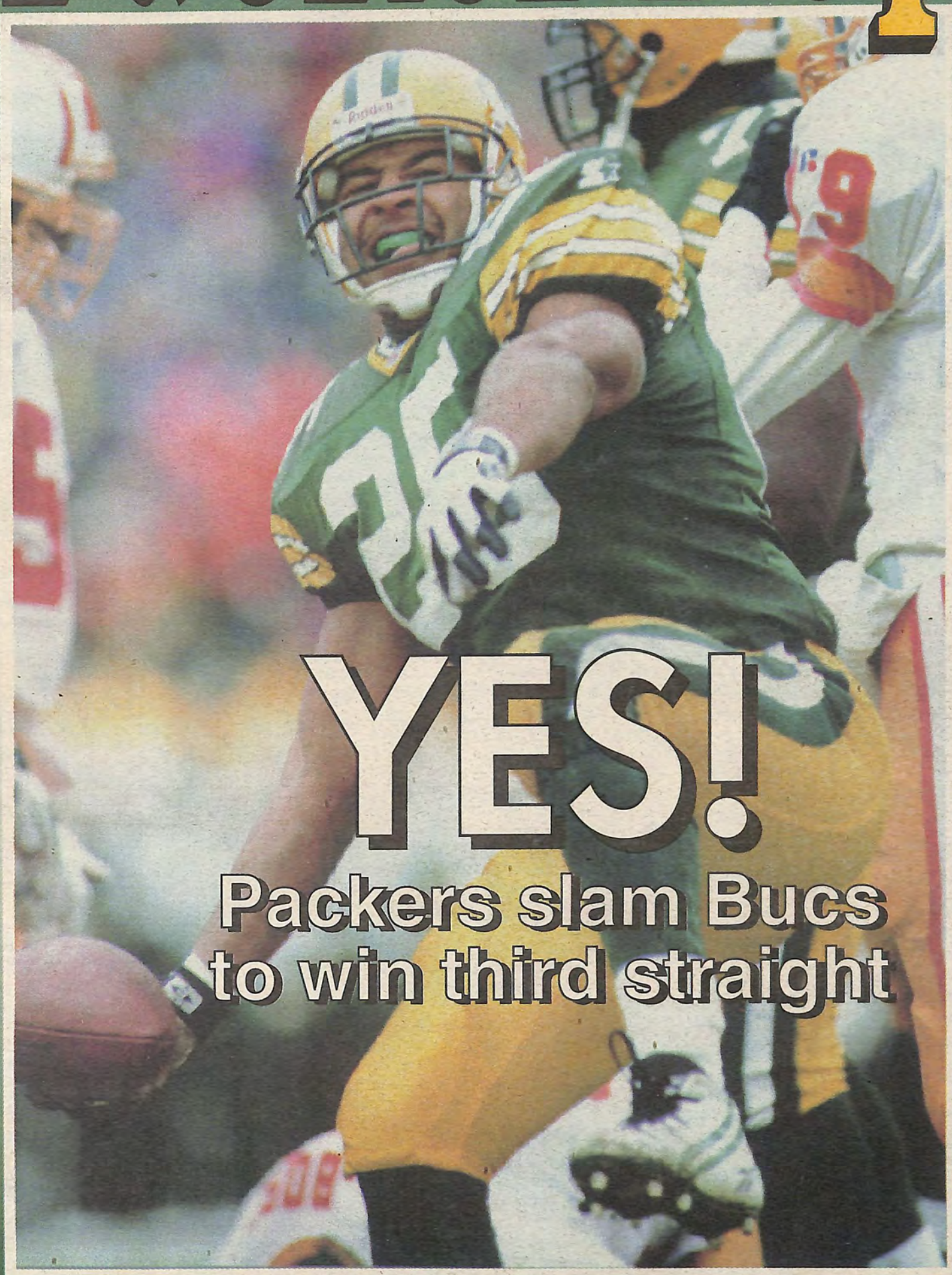

YES!

Packers slam Bucs to win third straight

Bennett extends himself

LaBounty achieving milestones

The game that Favre 'arrived'

LAMBEAU FIELD GREEN BAY U.S.A.

Packer Report

December 2, 1995

ON THE COVER

Fullback Dorsey Levens winds up to spike the ball after scoring a touchdown in the Packers' 35-13 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday. Levens scored two touchdowns as the Packers improved to 8-4. For more, see page **3**.

Photo by: Mark A. Wallenfang

Fab five 5

Brett Favre, Robert Brooks and Edgar Bennett are grabbing the headlines and playing well, but credit Green Bay's offensive line, too, says Larry McCarren.

LaBounty 8-9

The month of November has been one to remember for Matt LaBounty, and with good reason. The defensive lineman has accomplished three milestones.

Color poster 14-15

Photographer Mark A. Wallenfang features Packers defensive end Reggie White.

Rookie sets 17

One surefire entity that football card collectors love are rookie cards. The prospect that any first-year player could develop into a star brings a passionate excitement.

Rare ability 18-19

Being a tough, time-tested NFL veteran of 10 years, safety Mike Prior knows how to hit, but he also can deliver a hit with a baseball bat as well.

Coming out 24

Brett Favre officially arrived on Sept. 20, 1992. That's when Don Majkowski injured his ankle against the Cincinnati Bengals and Favre took over – for good.

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"Packer Trivia"

You can win "Packer Legends in Facts," a new book by Eric Goska that retails for $29.95 just by answering a Packer trivia question. Each winner will be mailed one copy of the book within three to four weeks from the time the question is printed. There will be a random drawing in case there is more than one correct answer. To be eligible to win, all answers must be postmarked no later than **one week** from the date on the cover of the *Packer Report*. The answer to each question will be published two issues after it is printed.

To enter, write your name, address, phone number and answer on a postcard and send to: Packer Report, "Trivia contest," 1317 Lombardi Access Road, Green Bay, WI 54304. Here's the question:

Which Packer played in more playoff games than any other Packer?

Answer to Nov. 11 question on page 6.

Photo by Mark A. Wallenfang

Brett Favre had another outstanding game for the Packers Sunday.

Team showing lots of desire

Ray Nitschke

Featured columnist

It was kind of a funny game Sunday.

The Packers started off kind of slowly against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers before winning 35-13, but the game really changed when the Packers stopped the Bucs with a goal-line stand in the second quarter.

Tampa Bay had some momentum going, but that goal-line stand really took something away them.

They had a first-and-goal from the 4 yard line and had to settle for a field goal, which gave them a 10-7 lead.

The Bucs got the lead but the Packers got the momentum. From that point on, the Packers really got it going.

Down around the goal line it's an attitude thing. It's easy to let the opponent score, but it's also in the "red zone" where you find out who really wants to play. It's all character inside the 10 and the Packers showed that they have the character to win more than the Buccaneers. You've got to want it more than the other guy and the Packers won that battle.

The offense then made things happen behind Brett Favre, who once again on a bad ankle and all, showed his ability to move out of the pocket and throw the ball. He has really been spectacular.

It takes big plays by great players to win and the Packers came up with some big ones on Sunday. Edgar Bennett not only ran well but showed he's got great hands and can make great catches. You just don't see the Packers dropping the ball. The receiver corps have been outstanding and that really helps Brett.

It was a very important game for each team and the Bucs came into Green Bay with a winning record at 6-5. I think after the first few series, the Packers got a wakeup call down by the goal line. From then on, many individuals came up and made some big plays on the defense. Reggie White, LeRoy Butler, Sean Jones and Wayne Simmons all had a good game. The special teams did well kicking and punting. It takes everybody to win.

You've got to have everybody contribute. Nobody can relax.

Sure the Bucs moved the ball, but they only scored one touchdown and the defense came up with plays when they had to. Offensively, the Packers came up with big plays and the offensive line opened up big holes, keeping their opponents off-balance. The Packers came up with 35 points against a team that hadn't been scored upon that much.

It was good victory and that's what we have to do from now on in. They have to build on it. The Packers are on the right course. They're fired up and they're doing things as a team. Everybody's contributing. That's what it takes. What a better time for that to happen than in the last stretch of the season. This is when you really want to play your best football.

The Packers are playing winning football and doing what it takes to win. They're on a roll and this is a good time to be on a roll. Now it comes down to who wants it the most.

Title drive's alive

Packers maintain Central lead by whipping Buccaneers

Todd Korth

Packer beat

Packers 35 Bucs 13

There seems to be no doubt that Brett Favre and the Green Bay Packers are in the midst of a special season.

The Packers, ignited by Favre and Robert Brooks, maintained their drive to win the Central Division for the first time in 23 years with one of their finest all-around performances of the season and coasted to a 35-13 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Sunday at Lambeau Field.

Green Bay got another stellar game from Favre, who completed 16 of 24 passes for 267 yards and three touchdowns, including two to Brooks. The defense put in a solid effort in stopping the run as the Packers improved to 8-4, Green Bay's best mark after 12 games since it won the Central in 1972 with a 10-4-0 record.

"We're in first and I think we've earned it," said Favre, who guided the Packers to their third straight win. "It feels good. We have some guys in here who don't want to let it slip away."

The Packers defense limited the Buccaneers (6-6) to just 30 yards rushing, but gave up 295 in the air. Still, the Packers, who beat the Bucs for the sixth straight time, stopped Tampa Bay when they had to and had some impressive stands throughout the game.

The Packers, rated 17th in the NFL against the rush entering the game, held Tampa's leading rusher Errict Rhett to minus one yard on 13 carries. Rhett entered the game third in the NFC in rushing with 896 yards on 253 carries.

Meanwhile, Packers running back Edgar Bennett had another impressive game by rushing for 60 yards on 14 carries. Bennett also had three catches for 85 yards, including two spectacular grabs that set up touchdowns. Bennett now has 808 yards on 237 attempts and needs to average 48 yards per game over the final four games to become the Packers' first 1,000-yard rusher since 1978.

"It was a big win for us, a huge win," said Packers coach Mike Holmgren, whose team is four games above the .500 mark for the first time since he took over in 1992. "Both teams had a lot at stake and it keeps us leading the division. It keeps our momentum going. There were a lot of things built into this game"

Tampa (6-6), off to its best start since 1979, had a chance to pull into a tie for first place with the Packers, but Green Bay's offense overpowered the Bucs and the defense came up with some key stops, including a goal-line stand near the end of the first half.

"Our quote-unquote star players made plays today," said Holmgren. "Brooks and Favre on offense. On defense, we got our pass rush when we needed it and we kept them out of the end zone a couple of times when we had to."

With the score tied at 7 late in the second quarter, Tampa had a first and goal from the 4, but the Packers defense stood firm and forced the Bucs to settle for a field goal and a 10-7 lead.

"The goal-line stand was huge," said Holmgren. "That type of stand really juices up everybody. So anytime you can get one of those in a game, usually it's a pretty good momentum shift."

It was indeed.

The Packers got the ball back on their own 29 and quickly moved to the 48 on a 9-yard run by Edgar Bennett and a 8-yard pass from Favre to Keith Jackson.

Favre then sparked the crowd of 59,218 by throwing a 54-yard touchdown pass to Brooks, which enabled Favre to become the first quarterback in Packer history to throw for more than 3,000 yards in four consecutive seasons. Brooks broke open on a hitch-and-go pattern and was wide open down the left sideline.

"You guys don't realize how much Brett has progressed over the years, man," said Brooks, who finished with six catches for 114 yards and two touchdowns. "I wasn't even the first read or the second. It was a play where I was designed to run the corner and hold the safety on the backside."

Favre hit Brooks on the run and the Packers took the lead for good.

The Packers' defense forced the Bucs to punt after three plays thanks to pass deflections by LeRoy Butler and Reggie White and a shanked punt by the Bucs' Reggie Roby to Tampa Bay's 36.

Bennett then made perhaps the best catch of the year by a Packer when he made a diving grab for a 31-yard gain down the left sideline with less than a minute remaining before halftime. The catch set up Dorsey Levens' one-yard touchdown run for a 21-10 lead.

Photos by Mark A. Wallenfang

Joe Kelly (57), right, and Darius Holland, left, stop Errict Rhett.

"I just turned and, at the time Edgar was sort of covered, but I knew he was going to out-run his guy," said Favre. "I didn't think he would lay out and catch it the way he did, but that was a big-time catch for anybody. For a running back, that's really big."

Tampa Bay chewed up more than half of the third quarter with a 56-yard drive that resulted in a 48-yard field goal by Michael Husted. The Bucs moved down to the Packers' 25 on a 10-yard pass from Trent Dilfer to Alvin Harper, but a penalty and a sack by Mike Prior and Sean Jones pushed the Bucs back to the 31.

The rest of the third quarter and the first part of the fourth was slowed by penalties, but the Packers extended their lead to 28-13 on a one-yard plunge by Levens. The touchdown was set up by Bennett's second brilliant catch of the game. This time Bennett climbed over safety Kenneth Gant to pull in a 28-yard pass from Favre to the Bucs' 2.

Favre saved Green Bay's best drive and play of the game for the end.

Starting at their own seven, the Packers moved to Tampa Bay's 50 before linebacker Hardy Nickerson was ejected for throwing a punch at center Frank

Mike Prior (39), right, and Sean Jones sack Trent Dilfer.

SEE PACKERS PAGE 6

SCORING SUMMARY

Tampa Bay Buccaneers	**0**	**10**	**3**	**0**	**13**
Green Bay Packers	**7**	**14**	**7**	**7**	**35**

Packers, 1, 2:13, Ingram 9-yard pass from Favre (Jacke, kick) (4-39, 1:45) 0-7

Buccaneers, 2, 12:47, Rhett 1-yard run (Husted, kick) (11-80, 4:26) 7-7

Buccaneers, 2, 3:29, Husted 19-yard field goal (15-68, 8:19) 10-7

Packers, 2, 2:12, Brooks 54-yard pass from Favre (Jacke, kick) (3-71, 1:17) 10-14

Packers, 2, 0:38, Levens 1-yard run (Jacke, kick) (3-36, 1:03) 10-21

Buccaneers, 3, 8:31, Husted 48-yard field goal (13-56, 6:29) 13-21

Packers, 3, 0:20, Levens 1-yard run (Jacke, kick) (4-46, 2:12) 13-28

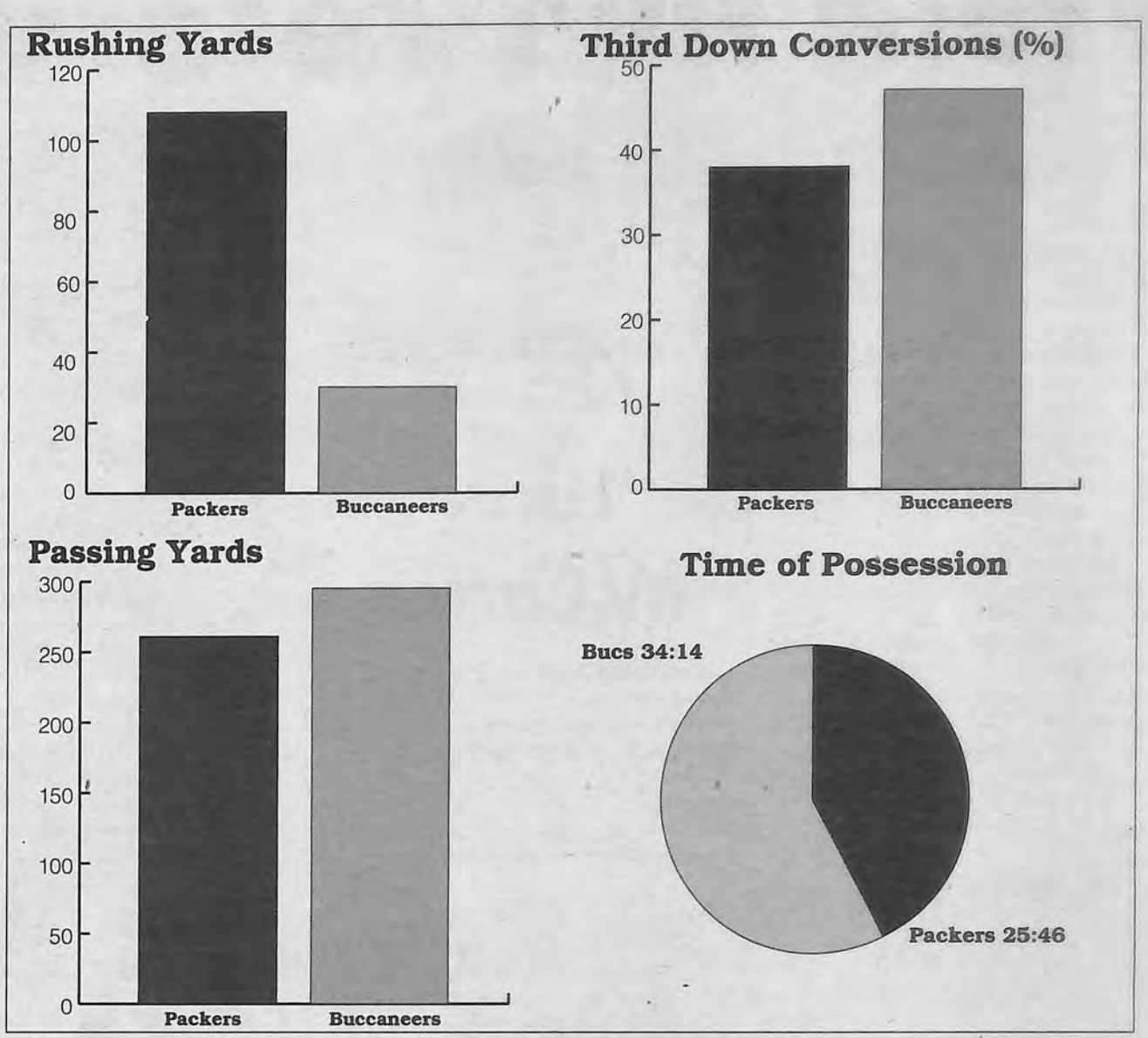
Packers, 4, 6:49, Brooks 3-yard pass from Favre (Jacke, kick) (11-93, 6:16) 13-35

Attendance: 59,218; tickets distributed: 60,790; unused: 1,572; time: 3:03

Weather: Temperature 34, humidity 92, wind E 9 mph

FINAL TEAM STATISTICS

	Bucs	Packers
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	22	22
By Rushing	3	8
By Passing	18	13
By Penalty	1	1
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	7-15-47%	3-8-38%
FOURTH DOWN EFFICIENCY	0-1-0%	0-0-0%
TOTAL NET YARDS	325	369
Total Offensive Plays (inc. time thrown passing)	71	50
Average gain per offensive play	4.6	7.4
NET YARDS RUSHING	30	108
Total Rushing Plays	18	25
Average gain per rushing play	1.7	4.3
NET YARDS PASSING	295	261
Times thrown — yards lost attempting to pass	4-29	1-6
Gross yards passing	324	267
PASS ATTEMPTS-COMPLETIONS-HAD INT.	49-28-0	24-16-0
Average gain per pass play (inc. # thrown passing)	5.6	10.4
KICKOFFS-In End Zone-Touchbacks	4-0-0	6-1-0
PUNTS Number and Average	5-34.6	4-36.5
Had Blocked	0	0
FGs-PATs Had Blocked	0-0	0-0
TOTAL RETURN YARDAGE (Not Including Kickoffs)	0	18
No. and Yards Punt Returns	1-0	3-18
No. and Yards Kickoff Returns	6-110	4-79
No. and Yards Interception Returns	0-0	0-0
PENALTIES Number and Yards	11-69	8-54
FUMBLES Number and Lost	1-0	2-0
TOUCHDOWNS	1	5
Rushing	1	2
Passing	0	3
EXTRA POINTS Made-Attempts	1-1	5-5
FIELD GOALS Made-Attempts	2-2	0-0
SAFETIES	0	0
FINAL SCORE	13	35
TIME OF POSSESSION	34:14	25:46



GREEN BAY PACKERS

RUSHING	Att.	Net Yds.	Avg.	Long Gain	TD
Bennett	14	60	4.3	15	0
Levens	7	18	2.6	4	2
Favre	2	18	9.0	12	0
Henderson	2	12	6.0	8	0

PASSING	Att.	Com.	Yds.	TKD	Yds.	TD	LG	Had Int.
Favre	24	16	267	1	6	3	54	0

PASS RECEIVING	No.	Yds.	LG	TD
Brooks	6	114	54	2
Ingram	4	47	16	1
Bennett	3	85	31	0
Morgan	1	11	11	0
Jackson	1	8	8	0
Levens	1	2	2	0

PUNTING	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TB	In 20	G
Hentrich	4	146	36.5	0	2	45

PUNT RETURNS	No.	FC	Yds.	LG	TD
Freeman	3	0	18	14	0

KICKOFF RETURNS	No.	FC	Yds.	LG	TD
Freeman	3	0	59	24	0
Jervey	1	0	20	20	0

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

RUSHING	Att.	Net Yds.	Avg.	Long Gain	TD
Ellison	4	20	5.0	15	0
Dilfer	1	11	11.0	11	0
Rhett	13	-1	-.1	3	1

PASSING	Att.	Com.	Yds.	TKD	Yds.	TD	LG	Had Int.
Dilfer	49	28	324	4	29	0	26	0

PASS RECEIVING	No.	Yds.	LG	TD
Harris	10	122	23	0
Harper	6	68	26	0
Dawsey	3	49	23	0
Hawkins	3	13	8	0
Rhett	2	29	17	0
Ellison	2	14	9	0
Moore	1	21	21	0
Thomas	1	8	8	0

PUNTING	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TB	In 20	LG
Roby	5	173	34.6	0	1	43

PUNT RETURNS	No.	FC	Yds.	LG	TD
Edmonds	1	1	0	0	0

KICKOFF RETURNS	No.	FC	Yds.	LG	TD
Edmonds	6	0	110	21	0

GREEN BAY PACKERS
Unofficial

	T	A	SK	YL	INT.	PD	FR
Simmons	6	2	0.0	0.0	0	3	0
Koonce	3	3	0.0	0.0	0	1	0
McGill	5	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Butler	4	1	0.0	0.0	0	1	0
Kelly	4	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Jones	3	2	1.5	8.0	0	0	0
Newsome	3	2	0.0	0.0	0	2	0
Prior	3	2	0.5	5.0	0	0	0
Evans	4	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
White	3	0	1.0	10.0	0	1	0
Teague	1	2	0.0	0.0	0	2	0
LaBounty	2	0	1.0	6.0	0	0	0
Brown	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Jurkovic	1	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
Unofficial

	T	A	SK	YL	INT.	PD	FR
Gant	6	3	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Mayhew	6	1	0.0	0.0	0	1	0
Brooks	3	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
DuBose	3	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Everett	3	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Dimry	2	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Ahanotu	2	1	0.0	0.0	0	1	0
Marts	2	1	0.0	0.0	0	1	0
Nickerson	1	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Curry	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Sapp	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Dotson	1	0	1.0	6.0	0	0	0
Stargell	1	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Wheeler	1	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0

KEY: T=Tackle, A=Assist, SK=Sack, YL=Yards Lost
INT.=Interceptions, PD=Pass Defense, FR=Fumble Recovery

Front five deserve credit

Larry McCarren

Featured columnist

Brett Favre, Robert Brooks and Edgar Bennett draw the offensive headlines, and deservedly so, but we're going to take a look at that unit's blue collar workers – the offensive line.

That group is in the midst of its best stretch in more than just recent memory, and that's certainly helped the headliners reach the front page.

Ken Ruettgers plays the second most critical position on an offensive team – left tackle. His main job is to protect Brett Favre's blind side, and he does it by being a master technician. "Rut" practices his pass set before, after and during practice. He must also do it at home while watching TV, because 99.9 percent of the time, it is absolutely flawless. By starting the play correctly, Ruettgers gives himself a chance to succeed on every play, and he does just that on a very regular basis even though he regularly draws the opponent's best pass rusher.

Aaron Taylor lines up next door at left guard, and if this guy isn't in the Pro Bowl within the next few years, quit reading this column. He's got the entire package, strength for run blocking and quick feet that enable him to pass block. Due to injury, this is basically Aaron's rookie season, and yet no one would know it. Some folks think only defensive players have a "nasty" approach to the game, but those folks don't know Aaron Taylor.

What Ruettgers is to the group in terms of technique, Frank Winters is just as important in terms of attitude. If you were going to get into a bar room brawl, call Frank and your chances of winning were just increased tenfold. The interesting thing about the Packers' center is that you'd never know it by looking at him. He doesn't say much, moves around kind of slow and easy, but when it's full-go, Frank is full-go and then some. The next time you watch a Packer game, check to see who's hustling downfield to knock somebody off the ball carrier. It'll be No. 52. Toss in the fact that he's an equally effective run and pass blocker, and the Packers have one fine center.

Harry Galbreath wins the unit's intensity award. The right guard is so focused during games he doesn't talk to anybody, not even to his teammates. Because Harry's the strong, silent type, he's quietly played through injuries this season that would have kept lesser men on the sidelines. The Packers need guards who can run and block on the move and that is something Harry does very well. It looks like he feels his whole body is a weapon, because he's used every bit of it, from head to toe, to get a defender on the ground.

Another thing about the ex-Dolphin, he truly cares about contributing, and it shows in the way he plays.

When Joe Sims signed with Philadelphia, right tackle was supposed to be a question mark. Earl Dotson answered in a 310-pound way. Much like Taylor, he's a young player with unique ability. Despite his size, Earl's got the feet of a ballerina, and that makes him an effective pass blocker. He came to Green Bay from Texas A&I with the tag of an exceptional drive blocker who was also raw. A re-birth in attitude and a lot of hard work have eliminated the "raw" part, and big Earl can still drive block. He's taken folks and knocked them all the way to the other side of Winters. Over the past six months, Dotson has gone from "maybe on the team" to "maybe in the Pro Bowl some day."

Those are the five you don't here much about, but without their fine work, you wouldn't hear much about anybody.

Photo by Mark A. Wallenfang

Edgar Bennett ran for 60 yards on Sunday and caught three passes for 85 yards.

Bennett displays his receiving skills

By W. Keith Roerdink

Sixty-yards rushing. Eighty-five yards receiving. Just another day at the office for halfback Edgar Bennett.

All season long Bennett has been an offensive machine for the Green and Gold and his 145-yard performance against the Buccaneers was no exception. Bennett's 14 carries and three receptions helped him go over 100 combined yards for the eighth time this season, five of those being Packer victories, and it elevates his season totals to 808 yards on the ground and 486 through the air.

As he closes in on becoming Green Bay's first 1,000-yard rusher since Terdell Middleton ran for 1,116 in 1978, not much attention has been paid to his receiving skills which were put on display last year when he caught 78 balls for 546 yards while playing fullback. But on Sunday those skills stole the spotlight in spectacular fashion with two highlight film caliber catches on the way to his highest receiving yardage performance of the season.

"He was marvelous. In fact, I said I wish I had known before today that he really had good hands," Packers coach Mike Holmgren joked. "He made two great catches and he really is an excellent receiver coming out of the backfield. The catches he had today were spectacular, and obviously they were big, huge plays."

The first came with 1:41 remaining in the first half with the Packers in their two-minute offense. On first down from the Tampa Bay 36, Bennett lined up wide with receiver Robert Brooks and drew cornerback Charles Dimry in a bump and run coverage.

"I knew they were gonna try to double me just looking at the pre-snap coverage so I was going to try to hold the linebacker and keep the safety off of (Bennett)," Brooks said.

> ***"When I turned around I thought I was a fan, because I was like 'Oh, my God.' That was one of the greatest catches I've seen in a while."***
>
> ***Robert Brooks***

Favre unloaded down the left sideline and just when it looked like he may have put too much on the ball, Bennett, who had gotten ahead of Dimry, put out both arms, dived and came down with the ball.

"I said to myself if I beat this guy down the sideline Brett might hang it out there, and he let it go and I saw the ball in the air and I just tried to go get it," said the ever- humble Bennett.

For Favre, there was never a doubt that he would make the catch. The dramatic way Bennett did, though, was a bit of a surprise.

"Edgar was sort of covered at the time but I knew he would out-run his guy," Favre said. "I didn't think he would lay out and catch it the way he did, but that was a big time catch – for anybody. For a running back it was really big."

Brooks, who's made his own share of big catches this season was equally awed.

SEE **BENNETT** PAGE 6

Packers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Winters. The Packers then ran the ball five straight times up the middle to the Bucs' three before Favre designed a play on the run. On a third-and-two, Favre ran to his right, pivoted and fired a pass through the hands of linebacker Darnell Stephens to Brooks who was streaking in the opposite direction across the back of the end zone.

"From where I was," said Holmgren, "I can't even believe it happened. That was a miraculous thing. I'm hoping that if he's on like that, when he does crazy things and when he stays in the pocket, this might be something special this year because quarterbacks can't usually do what he did on that last play."

Green Bay began its first scoring drive on Tampa Bay's 39. Brooks caught an 18-yard pass off a slant pattern that pushed him over 1,000 yards for the first time in his 4-year career. After Favre scrambled for six yards to the 15 and Bennett ran for another six to the nine, Favre fired a bullet to Mark Ingram, who dived in the back of the end zone to open the scoring.

A questionable pass interference call on Craig Newsome in the end zone against Harper on a third-and-goal from the 5 set up the Bucs' first touchdown. Rhett squirmed into the end zone on the next play from one yard out to tie the game at 7-7.

Packer trivia winner

Kevin Jensen of Oelwein, Iowa, won a copy of "Packer Legends in Facts," a new book by Eric Goska, by correctly answering a trivia question in the *Packer Report* published in the Nov. 11 issue.

Jensen was selected from a number of people who correctly answered that the contracts for Packers general manager Ron Wolf and head coach Mike Holmgren were extended in 1994 through 1999.

To win, all answers must be postmarked no later than one week from the date on the cover of the Packer Report. If there is more than one correct answer, a drawing will be held to select a winner. The books will be mailed out by Tech/Data Publications, Germantown, Wis., (414) 251-7027.

Photo by Mark A. Wallenfang

Reggie White, who had one sack Sunday, eyes the quarterback.

Bennett

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

"When I turned around I thought I was a fan, because I was like 'Oh, my God.' That was one of the greatest catches I've seen in a while. He was all full of dirt and it was in his facemask, so I had to clean him up a little."

The play was Bennett's only catch of the half and set up Dorsey Levens' one yard run two plays later that put the Packers on top 21-10 at the half.

Bennett's second grab was a slick 26-yarder midway through the third when Favre stepped up in the pocket, almost ahead of the line of scrimmage and threw out to him on the right sideline.

That catch was good but it didn't come close to his last grab late in the third quarter. Favre sprinted out to his right on first down at Tampa Bay's 30. With none of his primary targets open, he threw back to his left and found Bennett matched up with saftey Kenneth Gant whom Bennett outjumped for the ball at the five yard line, before being brought down at the two. Levens' second score of the afternoon made it 28-13.

"He was about the fifth read on that play," Favre said. "I don't think in the history of this offense the ball has ever been thrown to that guy. Edgar made a great play."

"It's all about making plays and that's what I was trying to do," Bennett said.

With Bennett's versatility, he may leave the Packer coaches looking for new wrinkles to put in the offense for him. Bennett even has a suggestion.

"I can throw the ball, so you never know," he said through his laughter.

Most likely, Bennett will remain a double, rather than triple threat. That, however, has proved to be more than enough.

Keith Roerdink is a freelance writer from Sheboygan.

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Defense grounds Bucs' running game

By Brett Christopherson

The Green Bay Packers defense experienced a little deja vu Sunday afternoon at Lambeau Field.

Faced with the daunting task of stopping one of the game's better running backs in Tampa Bay's Errict Rhett, the Packer "D" was definitely up to the challenge as they held Rhett to an incredible minus-1 yard rushing on just 13 carries.

Ironically, those are the exact same numbers Detroit running back Barry Sanders "piled up" in the Packers' 16-12 NFC Wild Card playoff victory over the Lions at Lambeau Field last year in one of Green Bay's more memorable defensive performances.

But Rhett, who came into Sunday's battle third in the NFC with 896 yards rushing, wasn't the only Buccaneer back who had his trouble penetrating Green Bay's defensive front as the Packers limited Tampa Bay to 30 total yards on the ground which played a huge role in the Green and Gold's 35-13 win.

"Our run defense in general was excellent because I think that's the strength of Tampa Bay," coach Mike Holmgren said. "They run the ball very well and Errict Rhett is a fine back, he really is.

"We thought that would be very important in this game to stop them as best we could from running the football and I think our guys did a nice job of that."

As was the case in last year's win over the Lions, the key to stopping Tampa's potent running attack was an overall effort by Green Bay's front seven to blast through the Buccaneer offensive line which enabled them to swarm all over anyone attempting to run the ball.

"I don't think any one person can take credit for holding him (Rhett) to those yards," linebacker Joe Kelly said. "It's seven guys, the front seven. The front seven can set the tempo and they played well."

"The difference was the people," safety LeRoy Butler said. "Joe Kelly, when you have a middle linebacker taking on the blocks like that, it's easy for (George) Koonce and Wayne (Simmons) to come over and clean it up. It was just being very aggressive up front."

Unfortunately, however, stopping the run forced Tampa Bay to throw the ball more often than they would like, considering its quarterback, Trent Dilfer, came into the game ranked last in the league with a dismal quarterback rating of 59.8. But Dilfer responded with his best game of the season, completing 28 of 49 for 324 yards, as the second-year player from Fresno State looked more like a Pro-Bowler instead of the inexperienced field general he really is.

"Many times, it's built into the confidence level during a game," Holmgren explained about Dilfer's unexpected success. "What he did a nice job of doing was stepping up in the pocket. I thought we had him a couple of times, but he's a big, strong guy. You just tip your hat to him and say 'good play.'"

While the defense did have its troubles stopping Tampa's passing game, Butler isn't concerned as the Packers head into the final stretch of the season.

"No. We offset it today," he said. "It's the 300 yards passing and 140-200 yards rushing that is a concern. But we held them to 30 yards rushing so it's not a concern."

A "special" victory: The Packers' victory over Tampa Bay left Green Bay with an 8-4 mark for the year, and for the first time in Holmgren's tenure saw the Packers sitting at four games over .500. That, coupled with just how well his team is playing right now, has the fourth-year coach believing this season could leave a lasting impression on fans and players alike.

"It was a big win for us, a huge win," he said. "I really think that this could be a special season for us."

Favre-to-Brooks: The Brett Favre to Robert Brooks combination has become one of the hottest in the NFL – and for both players, one of the more historic in team history.

With his 267 yards passing Sunday, Favre became the first quarterback in team history to pass for 3,000 yards in four different seasons. In fact, Favre's 3,000 yard seasons have come consecutively starting in 1992.

Somewhat of a surprise, however, has been Brooks as a big-time receiver. And after Sunday's game which saw him reel in six passes for 114 yards, Brooks proved just how important he has become to the Packer offense as he became only the fifth player in Packer history to notch over 1,000 yards receiving.

"Robert is just an outstanding player," said Holmgren. "I never doubted his ability to make plays. He's just a great contributor to what we're doing."

Brooks also moved past Eddie Lee Ivery into 17th place on Green Bay's all-time receiving list with his six grabs, leaving him with 163 career catches.

Too many penalties: While Green Bay has enjoyed a relatively penalty-free 1995 season, Sunday's game proved to be an exception as the Packers were flagged eight times for 54 yards. Tampa Bay drew 11 penalties for 69 yards.

"There were a lot of penalties," Holmgren said. "I don't like that, and I'm sure they (the players) don't either. We haven't been penalized a lot. It was sloppy."

Extra points: For the first time in his career, fullback Dorsey Levens enjoyed a two touchdown game, both coming on a pair of 1-yard runs.

Photo by Mark A. Wallenfang

Joe Kelly got his first start of the season Sunday at linebacker for the injured Fred Strickland.

■ Favre's ankle seems to be healing nicely, which was evidenced on the game's very first play when he was forced to scamper 12 yards.

"I think I'm going to have to deal with some pain the rest of the season," he said. "But that's kind of what I have to deal with anyway with every other thing I got going wrong."

■ Kelly, who made his first start of the season in place of the injured Fred Strickland, had five tackles and is looking forward to more playing time.

"I haven't played a full game since last year," he said. "It was good to get in there and just play some football."

■ The only Packer forced to leave the game was rookie cornerback Craig Newsome, who left during the fourth-quarter with a pinched nerve in his leg. Meanwhile, safety George Teague showed little problem playing with a broken toe on his right foot. Teague broke the toe in the Packers' win at Cleveland on Nov. 19.

■ The Packers' inactive third quarterback was Doug Pederson, who was acquired by Green Bay on Nov. 22. The Packers waived quarterback Bob Gagliano, 37, to make room for Pederson, 27, a third-year pro from Northeast Louisiana. Pederson was the Miami Dolphins' third quarterback for the last half of the 1993 season and the entire 1994 season.

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All-purpose lineman

Versatile LaBounty plugging the gaps on Pack's defense

Lee Remmel

Featured columnist

The month of November has been one to remember for Matt LaBounty...with good reason.

For him, in his third pro season, it has been distinguished by no fewer than three milestones:

In chronological order, not necessarily in order of importance, they were:

■ His first NFL start (memorable, in part, because he was stepping in for the already legendary Reggie White, in the Packers' historic, 150th meeting with the Chicago Bears).

■ His first sack of an NFL quarterback sack; and

■ His first role as game captain for the defense.

Adding historical dimension to the last-named moment is the fact it occurred on the day of the Packers' final appearance in Cleveland, whose Browns recently announced their imminent departure for Baltimore.

To fully appreciate the significance of these happenings for the personable San Franciscan, it is necessary to realize they have come only after a long, often frustrating, three-year "apprenticeship."

LaBounty

It has included a '92 season on the San Francisco practice squad, a '93 season divided between the practice squad and a six-game stint in a reserve role for the 49ers before being released, and an entire '94 campaign on injured reserve as a Packer while recovering from a major back problem.

Under the circumstances, it thus comes as no surprise to hear LaBounty say, "Basically, I consider this my first year in the NFL...This really has been my first year of being part of a team and trying to contribute to wins. It has brought back my enjoyment of the game.

"Up until this football season, my NFL career was kind of frustrating....No one wants to stay stagnant – everybody wants to move toward a goal. And that's all changed now...I didn't realize how much I didn't like it then (the last three years) until I am where I'm now."

'He deserved to start'

The first start, Matt readily acknowledged, was something special.

"I fight every year in camp just to make the team," he said, "so it was nice to get a start.... I would never have thought it would happen.

"At the time, I wasn't really thinking about it," LaBounty added. "I wouldn't have even thought that it would happen, because I pretty much had the idea that Reggie was going to play. (But) he told me during the week to prepare myself to play. That's when I realized that he was seriously hurt and might not play, because I don't think that, otherwise, he would have said that."

White, it has since been ascertained, had privately lobbied for LaBounty to get the start against the Bears, even though he knew he himself would be playing, "because Matt worked hard and he deserved to start."

No. 97, taking note of this development, said, "It's the first time I really heard that – that Reggie had made that request – so I don't know. But I think that's just the kind of person Reggie is. Everyone has a great deal of respect for him...I think he thinks about everybody on the team."

LaBounty was somewhat apologetic about one of the other November milestones, his baptismal pro sack.

"It was a garbage sack," he confided with a wry smile. "But, as Reggie says, they all count. He (Browns quarterback Eric Zeier) slipped and I just touched him down."

Captain Matt

Matt, who became a Packer via the waiver route in December of 1993, took obvious pride, however, in his role as defensive captain for the Cleveland game.

"It felt good to be out there representing our team as captain," he said. "Everyone works so hard, it's nice to be out representing the whole team. (But) I wasn't too comfortable in another way. I don't like the attention being put on me....When you're named a captain, it is announced on Wednesday and you're up in front of the team all week, helping the other captains lead the calisthenics."

Photo by James V. Biever

Matt LaBounty has begun to see more action for the Packers.

Reflecting upon that role, LaBounty couldn't repress a chuckle when he thought how he might 'explain' his copy of the captains' photo – which is taken before each game and presented to each of the captains – to the children he expects to have one day.

"I think it would be kind of funny," he said. "My kids might look at that picture and say, 'The Cleveland Browns???...Wow, Dad.' "

Making progress

Be that as it may, the Cleveland experience proved to be LaBounty's busiest to date.

"I think I had something like 35 or 37 snaps against the Browns," Matt reported. "At Jacksonville and in the second Bears game, I played in the high 20s. I didn't play the first two games of the season because of the knee injury I had in the preseason (a torn posterior cruciate ligament in his right knee, suffered in the Aug. 13 game at Pittsburgh)...I've averaged about 15 snaps a game since I got back."

And, defensive line coach Larry Brooks will tell you, LaBounty performed well in the process.

"Matt's been progressing really well since he came back off the knee injury he had during the preseason," Brooks said. "And I think the last two or three weeks, he has gained a lot of confidence in his

SEE **LABOUNTY** PAGE 9

LaBounty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

knee and he's been making plays...When he first came back, he was a little tentative – it's the mental part of gaining confidence.

"He's a guy that works hard and he's a guy that plays each down aggressively. He rotates with Reggie White and Sean Jones at end and he's our inside nickel pass rusher, so he's coming along real well...Each week since he's been back, he's gotten better."

Defensive Coordinator Fritz Shurmur, in turn, has been impressed throughout by what he terms Matt's "excellent instincts...He's a hard guy to fool. His strength is that he has the ability to anticipate what's going to happen and be in the right place at the right time."

Lots of rehab for back

Though a temporary setback for LaBounty, the knee problem wasn't as serious as the back injury which had sidelined the articulate Eugene, Ore., resident for the entire 1994 season.

"I herniated two disks in my back last year," Matt reported. "There was no surgery...With my problem in my back, surgery wouldn't have helped."

The treatment?

"A lot...a lot of rehab," he said. "Since it happened early in the season (during the preseason), I was able to take a month and start my rehab slowly...and it worked.

"I had a trainer from the University of Oregon...Kevin Stihl...who is unbelievable. I couldn't give him enough credit. He did all of the rehab and basically, I wouldn't be playing football if it were not for him."

Optimistic about future

Had he, LaBounty was asked, begun to wonder if his 'day' would ever come?

"I always have a positive approach," LaBounty replied. "I felt it would come sooner or later. I never let myself get down...If it wasn't going to happen, it wouldn't be because I didn't prepare myself...it wouldn't be because I didn't lift weights enough, or prepare myself in meetings."

> ***"I think the talent on this team and the scheme is just incredible. I think this defense is better than any defense I've been around – that's for sure."***
> ***Matt LaBounty***

And does he feel optimistic, now, about his future?

"I think so. I think, no matter what I do, I'm going to be happy....Whether I play football or I'm working in the workaday world, I feel things are going to work out and that I'll be happy.

"The simple things of life are what I enjoy," Matt continued. "Like going for walks, hiking, camping...anything in the outdoors...And I can go into a library and, in under 5 minutes, find something I'm interested in reading...Green Bay has a great library and I enjoy going there....I love to learn, love to read."

Confident in defense

Professionally, the 26-year-old University of Oregon alumnus is thoroughly sold on his defensive unit and the schematic approach.

"I just think the effort of the people I play with...the closeness...And there are no big egos...I think it all contributes. I think the talent on this team and the scheme is just incredible," he enthused. "I think this defense is better than any defense I've been around – that's for sure."

Struck as well by the camaraderie, the togetherness, he has found overall, LaBounty explained, "I just think if I was in Florida or Texas in the off-season, I could call, say, Keith Crawford and I could drop in and visit him without any hesitation...I think there were a lot of egos when I was in San Francisco....After practice there, each guy pretty much went his own way...The size of Green Bay has to help here. It's not very big so you see the guys more and you hang out with them."

The conversation returned to the original topic...November. Might it be the best month of his pro career?

"Absolutely," LaBounty rejoined without hesitation. "Nothing else comes close.

"But," he concluded with a chuckle, and an obvious allusion to the upcoming postseason, "I'm not going to lie to you...I'm hoping the months of December and January are much better."

Photo by Mark A. Wallenfang

LaBounty had a long rehab after he injured his back last year.

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Packer stats

DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

(unofficial through eleven games)

Player	Total Tackles	Solo	Asst.	Sacks/Yards	Int./Yards	Fum. Rec.	For. Fum.	Pass Def.
Butler	75	59	16	1.0/11.0	3/76	0	1	6
Evans	65	51	14	1.0/9.0	2/24	0	1	23
Simmons	60	49	11	3.0/22.0	0/0	1	0	2
Koonce	54	36	18	1.0/7.0	1/12	0	0	2
Newsome	48	35	13	0.0/0.0	0/3	0	0	8
Strickland	45	33	12	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	1
Teague	41	29	12	0.0/0.0	1/26	1	0	10
White	35	25	10	10/85.5	0/0	0	2	2
Jones	32	20	12	3.5/26.5	0/0	1	0	0
Jurkovic	28	22	6	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	0
Prior	21	14	7	0.0/0.0	1/9	0	0	4
McGill	18	9	9	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	0
Holland	16	9	7	1.5/7.0	0/0	0	0	1
Wilkins	15	12	3	3.0/14.0	0/0	0	0	1
Gi. Brown	13	10	3	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	0
Kuberski	7	4	3	1.0/5.0	0/0	0	0	0
Crawford	5	5	0	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	0
LaBounty	4	4	0	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	0
Harris	2	1	1	0.0/0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Kelly	1	1	0	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	0
Mullen	1	1	0	0.0/0.0	0/0	0	0	0

Touchdowns: Jones 1, fumble recovery in end zone vs. Minnesota (10/22); **Special teams tackles:** Wilson 14 (9-5), Crawford 11 (10-1), Prior 10 (9-1), Jervey 10 (6-4), Mickens 9 (5-4), Dorsett 9 (4-5), Harris 8 (6-2), Thomason 5(4-1), McGill 3 (3-0), LaBounty 3 (2-1), Williams 3 (1-2), Hentrich 2 (2-0), Chmura 2 (1-1), Jordan 2 (1-1), Kelly 2 (1-1), Mullen 2 (1-1), Levens 2 (0-2), Wilner 1 (1-0), Winters 1 (1-0), Bartrum 1 (0-1), Evans 1 (0-1); **Special teams forced fumbles:** Chmura 1, at Dallas (10/8); Jervey 1, at Chicago (9/11); **Misc. tackles:** Dotson 3, Brooks 2, Favre 2, Levens 2, Bennett 1, Freeman 1, Galbreath 1, Jackson 1, Winters 1.

PASSING	Att.	Cmp.	Yds.	Cmp. %	Yds./Att.	TD	TD%	Int.	Int. %	Long	Sack/Lost	Rating
Favre	396	241	2,913	60.9	7.36	25	6.3	12	3.0	99t	26/180	91.9
Detmer	16	8	81	50.0	5.06	1	6.3	1	6.3	25	0/0	59.6
Rubley	6	4	39	66.7	6.50	0	0.0	1	16.7	17	0/0	45.1
TEAM	418	253	3,033	60.5	7.26	26	6.2	14	3.3	99t	26/180	89.5
OPPONENTS	390	220	2,479	56.4	6.36	21	5.4	8	2.1	69t	26/189	85.0

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Dec. 24	vs.	Pittsburgh Steelers

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Sept. 3, L, 17-14	St. Louis	60,104
Sept. 11, W, 27-24	at Chicago	64,855
Sept. 17, W, 14-6	New York Giants	60,117
Sept. 24, W, 24-14	at Jacksonville	66,744
Oct. 8, L, 34-24	at Dallas	64,806
Oct. 15, W, 30-21	Detroit	60,302
Oct. 22, W, 38-21	Minnesot a	60,332
Oct. 29, L, 24-16	Detroit	73,462
Nov. 5, L, 27-24	Minnesota	62,839
Nov. 12, W, 35-28	Chicago	59,996
Nov. 19, W, 31-20	at Cleveland	55,388
Nov. 26	Tampa Bay	
Dec. 3	Cincinnati	
Dec. 10	at Tampa Bay	
Dec. 16	at New Orleans	
Dec. 24	Pittsburgh	

	Packers	Opponents
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	233	197
Rushing	60	70
Passing	158	118
Penalty	15	9
3rd Down: Made/Att	77/157	46/144
3rd Down Pct	49.0	31.9
4th Down: Made/Att	4/5	9/17
4th Down Pct	80.0	52.9
POSSESSION AVG.	31:49	28:11
TOTAL NET YARDS	3,850	3,466
Avg. Per Game	350.0	315.1
Total Plays	730	690
Avg. Per Play	5.3	5.0
NET YARDS RUSHING	997	1,176
Avg. Per Game	90.6	106.9
Total Rushes	286	274
NET YARDS PASSING	2,853	2,290
Avg. Per Game	259.4	208.2
Sacked/Yards Lost	26/180	26/189
Gross Yards	3,033	2,479
Att./Completions	418/253	390/220
Completion Pct.	60.5	56.4
Had Intercepted	14	8
PUNTS/AVERAGE	49/41.5	65/43.0
NET PUNTING AVG.	49/34.9	65/35.4
PENALTIES/YARDS	61/433	65/478
FUMBLES/BALL LOST	14/4	9/3
TOUCHDOWNS	33	29
Rushing	6	8
Passing	26	21
Returns	1	0

SCORE BY PERIODS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	PTS.
TEAM	59	94	54	70	0	277
OPPONENTS	34	69	59	74	0	236

SCORING	TD	RU	PA	Rt	K-PAT	FG	S	PTS.
Jacke	0	0	0	0	27/27	12/16	0	63
Brooks	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	48
Chmura	5	0	5	0				32
Bennett	5	2	3	0				30
Levens	5	1	4	0				30
Favre	3	3	0	0				18
Morgan	3	0	3	0				18
Hentrich	0	0	0	0	5/5	3/5	0	14
Jordan	2	0	2	0				12
Ingram	1	0	1	0				6
Jones	1	0	0	1				6
TEAM	33	6	26	0	32/32	15/21	0	277
OPPONENTS	29	8	21	0	29/29	11/12	0	236

2-Pt. Conversions: Chmura, TEAM 1-1, OPPONENTS 0-0

Sacks: White 10.0, Jones 3.5, Simmons 3.0, Wilkins 3.0, Holland 1.5, Butler 1.0, Evans 1.0, Koonce 1.0, Kuberski 1.0. LaBounty 1.0, Team 26.0, Opponents 26.0

RUSHING	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LG	TD
Bennett	223	748	3.4	20	2
Favre	27	127	4.7	40	3
Levens	20	77	3.9	22	1
Brooks	4	21	5.3	21	0
Henderson	4	20	5.0	17	0
Rubley	2	6	3.0	6	0
Detmer	3	3	1.0	5	0
Johnson	2	-2	-2.0	-2	0
Ingram	1	-3	-3.0	-3	0
TEAM	286	997	3.5	40	6
OPPONENTS	274	1,176	4.3	37	8

RECEIVING	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LG	TD
Brooks	67	972	14.5	99t	8
Bennett	41	401	9.8	35	3
Chmura	37	463	12.5	33	5
Levens	34	304	8.9	27	4
Ingram	28	332	11.9	29	1
Morgan	20	232	11.6	29t	3
Jordan	7	117	16.7	35	2
Jackson	6	55	9.2	22	0
Freeman	4	54	13.5	19	0
Mickens	3	50	16.7	24	0
Thomason	3	32	10.7	15	0
Henderson	3	21	7.0	9	0
TEAM	253	3,033	12.0	99t	26
OPPONENTS	220	2,479	11.2	69t	21

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LG	TD
Butler	3	76	25.3	76	0
Evans	2	24	12.0	24	0
Teague	1	26	26.0	26	0
Koonce	1	12	12.0	12	0
Prior	1	9	9.0	9	0
Newsome	0	3	0.0	3	0
TEAM	7	150	18.8	76	0
OPPONENTS	14	205	14.6	31	0

PUNTING	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Net	TB	IN	LG	B
Hentrich	47	2,034	43.3	34.9	4	18	61	2
TEAM	49	2,034	41.5	34.9	4	18	61	2
OPPONENTS	65	2,797	43.0	35.4	3	10	55	0

PUNT RETURNS	Ret.	FC	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
Freeman	22	0	212	9.6	26	0
Jordan	21	2	213	10.1	18	0
Evans	1	0	0	0.0	0	0
Ingram	1	0	0	0.0	0	0
Prior	1	2	10	10.0	10	0
TEAM	46	4	435	9.5	26	0
OPPONENTS	30	6	243	8.1	40	0

KICKOFF RETURNS	No.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
Jordan	21	444	21.1	33	0
Freeman	12	284	23.7	45	0
Jervey	4	100	25.0	28	0
Morgan	3	46	15.3	20	0
Arthur	1	10	10.0	10	0
Brooks	1	28	28.0	28	0
Jurkovic	1	17	17.0	17	0
TEAM	43	929	21.6	45	0
OPPONENTS	47	1007	21.4	46	0

FIELD GOALS	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Jacke	0/0	5/6	0/2	5/5	2/3
Hentrich	0/0	0/0	2/3	1/2	0/0
TEAM	0/0	5/6	2/5	6/7	2/3
OPPONENTS	1/1	3/3	6/6	1/2	0/0

Jacke: () () () () (42G) (42G,43G,34N,20G,27N) (51N,37N,26G) (20G,50G, 28G) (42G,50G,46G) () (28G)
Hentrich: () (32G, 38G) (38N) (47N, 49G) () () () () () () ()
Opponents: (19G) (20G) (37G, 32G) () (24G,35G) () () (38G) (36G, 47N, 39G) () (46G,28G)

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Bears seeking revenge

By David Marran

NOTES: History says a Bear win is likely Monday Night. The Bears have split with the Lions in each of the six seasons. Detroit beat the Bears 24-17 Nov. 19 in Chicago.

The winner has scored no more than 27 points in any of the series' last nine meetings.

Bears' Pro Bowl cornerback Donnell Woolford is likely to miss the game with a torn quadricep tendon. He did not play at Green Bay and against the Lions. Woolford was expected to miss the Bears' game at the New York Giants Nov. 26.

Jeff Graham is the first Bear in 31 seasons to amass at least six 100-yard receiving games in a season. The last to turn the trick was Johnny Morris in 1964. ... Quarterback Erik Kramer's rushing touchdown against Detroit Nov. 19 was his first since Nov. 10, 1991, when he played for the Lions.

THIS WEEK: At Detroit

SERIES HISTORY: Bears lead 75-51-5

LAST MEETING: Nov. 19 at Chicago: Lions 24, Bears 17

SCOUTING REPORT: Forget Barry Sanders, if the Bears can't stop the Lions' receiving duo of Herman Moore and Brett Perriman they will be in for a long night. In the Lions' win in Chicago Nov. 19, Moore and Perriman combined for 18 catches and 200 yards. They constantly used their size to their advantage against the smaller and lighter Bear cornerbacks. Sanders rushed for 120 yards and scored twice in Chicago.

NFC RANKINGS: Offense 2nd (4th rush, 4th pass); Defense 11th (2nd rush, 14th pass).

NOTES: Coach Wayne Fontes recently received a "make-the-playoffs-or-else" ultimatum from owner William Clay Ford but running back Barry Sanders said that hasn't been a factor. "Wayne hasn't told us we need to save his job. I don't know what Mr. Ford has told him. We played for our own personal pride. We've had some tough losses and I think that all of us were playing for the team."

Sanders joined Eric Dickerson as the only backs in NFL history to gain at least 1,000 yards in their first seven seasons. ... Scott Mitchell went down early in the Nov. 19 Bear game but Don Majkowski came on in relief and went 15 of 19 for 161 yards and one touchdown. "I just came in, that's my job: Having a veteran guy at a backup position who is capable of executing. That's what I did today. That's why they got me. They wanted a veteran guy to come in if something happened to Scott.

THIS WEEK: Bears

SERIES: Bears lead 75-51-5.

LAST MEETING: Nov. 19 at Chicago: Lions 24, Bears 17

SCOUTING REPORT: Detroit did a great job on Bears' wide receiver Curtis Conway in the first meeting. Conway did not catch pass Nov. 19 in Chicago. ... Brett Perriman caught 12 passes for 142 yards in the first game against the Bears. ... The Detroit special teams deflected a punt and blocked a field goal against the Bears in Chicago Nov. 19. ... Detroit has won four of its last five games against the Bears in the Silverdome.

NFC RANKINGS: Offense 3rd (6th rush, third pass); Defense 15th (12th rush, 13th pass).

NOTES: The Minnesota Vikings' 43-point effort at New Orleans was their second-highest point output of the year. Minnesota beat Pittsburgh 44-24 in Week 4. ...Warren Moon threw four touchdown passes in the rout of New Orleans. ... Wide receiver Cris Carter entered Week 13 with 10 touchdown catches. ... Dennis Green is 36-23 in his 3-1/2 seasons with the Vikings. ... The Vikings are 18-11 in November and December in Green's tenure in Minnesota. ... Rookie running back James Stewart paced Viking rushers with 77 yards on eight carries in the win over New Orleans. Stewart was a fifth round draft pick. ... Moon entered Week 13 with no interceptions in his last 167 attempts.

THIS WEEK: Tampa Bay

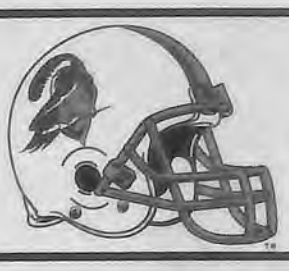
SERIES: Vikings lead 25-10.

LAST MEETING: Oct. 15 at Tampa: Bucs 20, Vikings 17 OT.

SCOUTING REPORT: The last two Tampa-Minnesota tilts have gone into overtime with the Bucs winning both by 20-17 scores. ... Green is 4-3 against the Bucs. ...Moon is 2-2 in his career vs. Tampa Bay. ... Minnesota is shooting for its fifth consecutive season of at least a .500 record. ... Following the Tampa Bay game, the Vikings finish with a home game against the Cleveland Browns and road games with the San Francisco 49ers and Cincinnati Bengals. ... Fuad Reveiz will become the first Viking to lead the club in kicking for five straight seasons since Rick Danmeier did it from 1978 to 1982.

NFC RANKINGS: Offense 7th (8th rush, 6th pass); Defense: 7th (3rd rush, 12th pass).

NOTES: After toying with the idea of using Casey Weldon, Tampa coach Sam Wyche stuck with Trent Dilfer quarterback the entire way in the Bucs' 17-16 win over the Jacksonville Jaguars' Nov. 19.



Running back Errict Rhett turned in his second consecutive stellar performance in Week 12. A week after gaining 144 yards on 25 carries against Detroit, Rhett punished the Jaguars for 100 yards and two touchdowns. ... The Bucs escaped with a one-point win Nov. 19 when the Jaguars opted to go for two points and the win instead of one point and the tie. The two-point conversion pass failed. The Jags recovered the onsides kick but Bucs' cornerback Martin Mayhew killed Jacksonville's rally hopes with an interception.

THIS WEEK: At Minnesota.

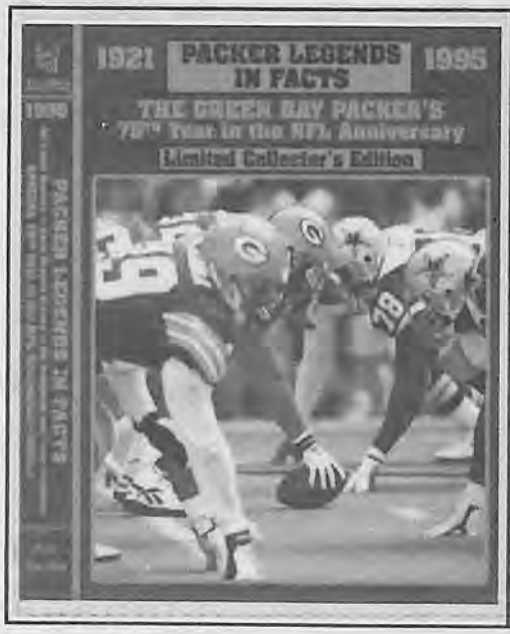
SERIES HISTORY: Vikings lead 25-10.

LAST MEETING: Oct. 15 at Tampa: Bucs 20, Vikings 17 OT.

SCOUTING REPORT: Free agent wide receiver Alvin Harper may be finding his form. The former Cowboy had four catches for 58 yards in the win over Jacksonville. ... A win over Minnesota would mean that the Bucs would not have a 10-loss season in a non-strike year since 1981. ... The Bucs have taken three of the last four meetings with the Vikings. ... The Bucs are going for only their second sweep of the Vikings. Tampa's only sweep of the Vikes came in 1990. ... The loser in this series has hit 20 points in a game since 1992.

NFC RANKINGS: Offense 15th (11th rush, 13th pass); Defense 9th (8th rush, 11th pass).

David Marran is sports editor of the Kenosha News.



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NFL always seems to be in a skirmish

Art Daley
Featured columnist

The National Football League fought in two wars – plus hundreds of skirmishes.

That particular thought comes to mind because the Packers are crossing the border and playing three American Conference teams in their final six games.

The reference is to Cleveland, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, with the Bengals visiting Lambeau Field next Sunday. The other AC team was newcomer Jacksonville, a Sept. 24 Packer victim.

This year's Amercian Conference Packer foes are a shade different. Cleveland and Pittsburgh aren't old line AC teams, like the Oakland Raiders, for instance. They were originally NFL teams and, along with the Baltimore Colts, crossed over to the AC in 1970 to give each conference 13 teams.

The American Football League was born in 1960 but Cincinnati didn't come aboard until 1970. The AFL became the American Conference when the two leagues officially merged and started playing each other in 1970.

The first match between two teams of the two leagues was in Super Bowl I on Jan. 15, 1966. It was the Packers vs. the Kansas City Chiefs and the game tickets didn't refer to it as SB I. It was called the world championship AFL-NFL game.

How time flies. Super Bowl XXX will be played in Phoenix Jan. 28,1996. And Packer Coach Mike Holmgren has already played 14 American Conference teams and produced nine victories. Oh yes, the NFL wars. It's a little ancient history but stick around and you might learn something new about this thing called American Professional Football.

Let's start with a little trivia forthcoming to win a trivia contest – or something.

Anybody remember the Chicago Rockers, the Miami Seahawks or the Los Angeles Dons? The Rockets were so bad in their first two years that they changed their name to Hornets for their last two seasons of life.

After World War II, Arch Ward, sports editor of the Chicago Tribune and the originator of today's Baseball All-Star game and the defunct College All-Star game, decided there should be some opposition to the NFL.

Ward formed the All-America Conference in 1946 with nine teams – Baltimore Colts, Cleveland Browns, San Francisco 49ers, Brooklyn-New York Yanks, Brooklyn Dodgers, Buffalo Bills (Bisons), Chicago Rockets, Los Angeles Dons and Miami Seahawks.

Jimmy Crowley, who later coached the Rockets for one season, was the conference's first president and Mrs. Lou Gehrig, wife of the baseball great, was named secretary. Crowley was one of the famed Four Horsemen of Notre Dame and incidentally, a native of Green Bay.

Thus, as the AAC flexed its muscles, the NFL and its 10 solid teams had to engage in an outright four-year war for the country's best players. Both sides suffered.

The Packers lost their first choices in 1948 and '49 and ran out of money during the '49 season. A Thanksgiving Day intrasquad game raised $50,000 to cover the payroll and the Packers picked up $150,000 in a life-saving stock drive early in 1950.

Meanwhile, the AAFC was in shambles and the three best teams, the Browns, Colts and 49ers, merged with the NFL after the '49 season. Before founder-coach Curly Lambeau resigned early in '50, he helped his team by drafting two big names, linebacker Clayton Tonnemaker and quarterback Tobin Rote. The Pack held on, built a new stadium in '57 and welcomed Vince Lombardi in '59.

Ten years later the NFL saw another war on the horizon. Lamar Hunt, a wealthy Texan, decided to start another pro football league and he named it the American Football League. There were eight teams – the New York Titans, later to become the Jets; the Boston Patriots, later to become New England; Dallas Texans, later to become the Kansas City Chiefs; Los Angeles Chargers, later to move to San Diego; Houston Oilers, Oakland Raiders, and Denver Broncos.

The NFL-AFL war of the 1960s didn't bother the Packers much because the Packers had a solid roster. Plus, the club's high draft choices wanted to play in Green Bay because the Packers were the rage at the time.

This war reached its peak in 1966 as the two leagues spent a combined $7 million to sign their 1966 draft choices. Of the 111 common draft choices that year, 79 signed with the NFL. During this war, the Packers lost one first choice, wide receiver Larry Elkins, who didn't make it big in the AFL. That year, 1965, the Pack's other first choice was Donny Anderson.

During the spring of '66, Hunt and Tex Schramm of Dallas held secret meetings to discuss a merger. On June 8, Commissioner Pete Rozelle announced the merger and the NFL was split into National and American Conferences. The first league competition started four years later. Since 1970 the NFL expanded to 30 teams with Seattle and Tampa Bay joining in '76 and Jacksonville and Carolina coming aboard this year.

Before this year, the Packers' record against the original AFL teams is a not-so-hot 20-42-2 for .328. What's more, the Packers have never beaten the Dolphins in eight starts.

And, of course, the aforementioned skirmishes! These are merely lawsuits the NFL has faced over the years. Al Davis sued the NFL and won in his bid to move from Oakland to Los Angeles. Now he's back in Oakland and I never did hear him say he screwed up by going to L.A.

Now Davis is suing the NFL again – over what I can't explain. So has this Jerry Jones, the king of Dallas, who went to court after the NFL sued him.

And now the NFL is faced with a few teams jumping to greener pastures. Never a dull moment but at least no war.

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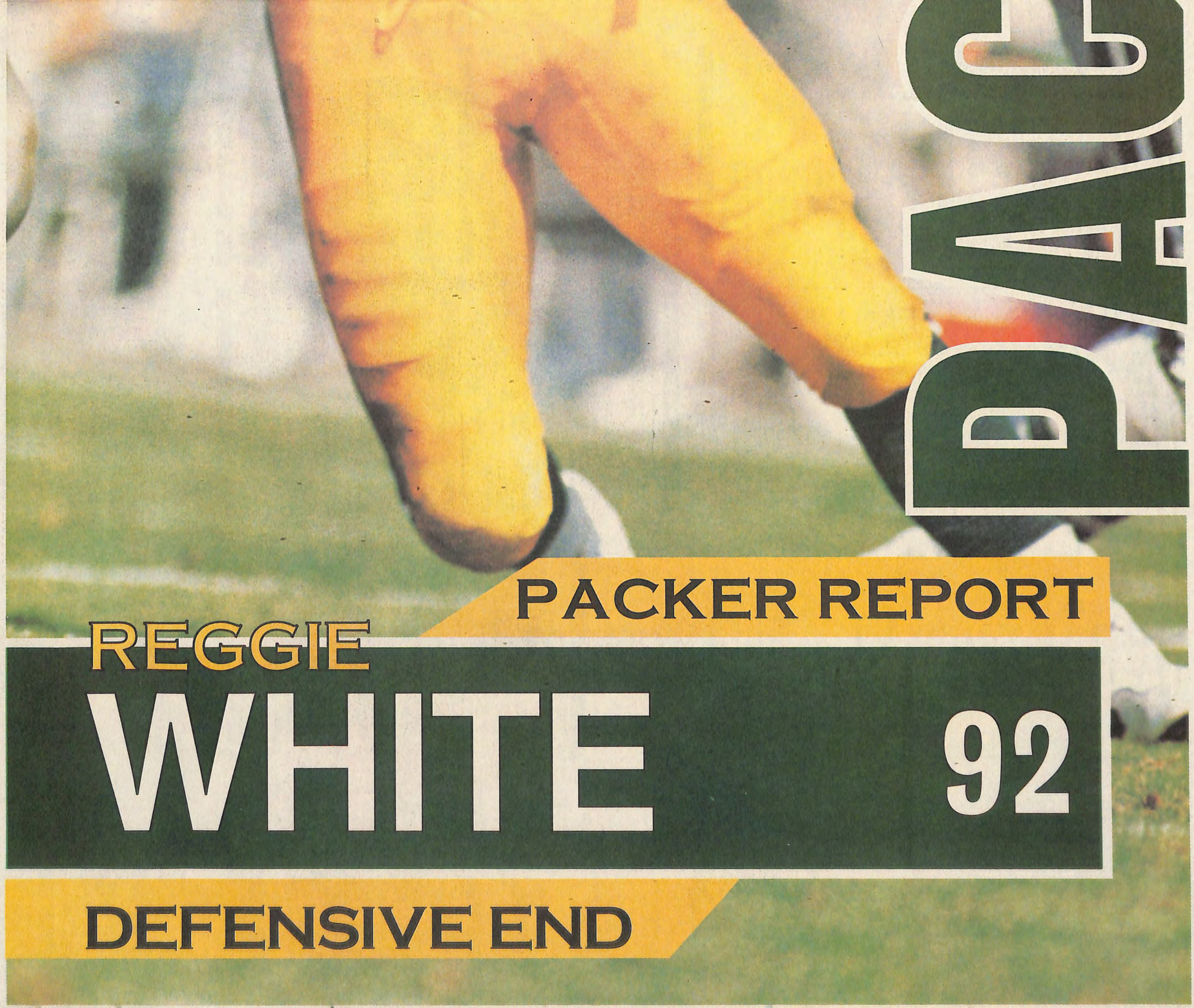

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DEFENSIVE END

NFL STANDINGS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Central

	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
PACKERS	8	4	0	.667	312	249
Chicago	7	5	0	.583	324	293
Detroit	6	6	0	.500	304	302
Minnesota	6	6	0	.500	300	293
Tampa Bay	6	6	0	.500	188	226

Eastern

	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Dallas	10	2	0	.833	343	214
Philadelphia	8	4	0	.667	249	255
Arizona	4	8	0	.333	211	326
N.Y. Giants	3	9	0	.250	223	273
Washington	3	9	0	.250	234	282

Western

	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
San Francisco	8	4	0	.667	335	173
Atlanta	7	5	0	.583	278	266
St. Louis	6	6	0	.500	214	277
Carolina	5	7	0	.417	228	247
New Orleans	5	7	0	.417	239	278

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

Eastern

	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Buffalo	8	4	0	.667	248	233
Indianapolis	7	5	0	.583	246	238
Miami	6	6	0	.500	303	261
New England	5	7	0	.417	212	267
N.Y. Jets	3	9	0	.250	179	295

Central

	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	8	4	0	.667	297	259
Cincinnati	5	7	0	.417	286	290
Houston	5	7	0	.417	273	256
Cleveland	4	8	0	.333	218	264
Jacksonville	3	9	0	.250	197	267

Western

	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	2	0	.833	277	185
Oakland	8	3	0	.727	271	187
Denver	6	6	0	.500	282	243
Seattle	5	7	0	.417	259	289
San Diego	4	7	0	.364	196	238

(Central Time)

Week 1

Sunday, Sept. 3
St. Louis 17, **PACKERS** 14
New England 17, Cleveland 14
Atlanta 23, Carolina 20, OT
Tampa Bay 21, Philadelphia 6
Miami 52, New York 14
Kansas City 34, Seattle 10
Chicago 31, Minnesota 14
Cincinnati 24, Indianapolis 21, OT
Houston 10, Jacksonville 3
San Francisco 24, New Orleans 22
Pittsburgh 23, Detroit 20
Oakland 17, San Diego 7
Washington 27, Arizona 7
Denver 22, Buffalo 7
Monday, Sept. 4
Dallas 35, N.Y. Giants 0

Week 2

Sunday, Sept. 10
Miami 20, New England 3
Pittsburgh 34, Houston 17
Minnesota 20, Detroit 10
Kansas City 20, N.Y. Giants 17, OT
Dallas 31, Denver 21
San Diego 14, Seattle 10
San Francisco 41, Atlanta 10
Oakland 20, Washington 8
St. Louis 17, New Orleans 13
Buffalo 31, Carolina 9
Cleveland 22, Tampa Bay 6
Indianapolis 27, N.Y. Jets 24, OT
Cincinnati 24, Jacksonville 17
Philadelphia 31, Arizona 19
Monday, Sept. 11
PACKERS 27, Chicago 24

Week 3

Sunday, Sept. 17
PACKERS 14, N.Y. Giants 6
Chicago 25, Tampa Bay 6
San Diego 27, Philadelphia 21
Kansas City 23, Oakland 17, OT
St. Louis 31, Carolina 10
Arizona 20, Detroit 17
San Francisco 28, New England 3
N.Y. Jets 27, Jacksonville 10
Buffalo 20, Indianapolis 14
Cleveland 14, Houston 7
Atlanta 27, New Orleans 24, OT
Seattle 24, Cincinnati 21
Denver 38, Washington 31
Dallas 23, Minnesota 17, OT
Monday, Sept. 18
Miami 23, Pittsburgh 10

Week 4

BYE: Buffalo, Carolina, Indianapolis, Miami, New England, Seattle
Sunday, Sept. 24
PACKERS 24, Jacksonville 14
N.Y. Giants 45, New Orleans 29
Minnesota 44, Pittsburgh 24
San Diego 17, Denver 6
Dallas 34, Arizona 20
Oakland 48, Philadelphia 17
Cleveland 35, Kansas City 17
St. Louis 34, Chicago 28
Tampa Bay 14, Washington 6
Atlanta 13, N.Y. Jets 3
Houston 38, Cincinnati 28
Monday, Sept. 25
Detroit 27, San Francisco 24

Week 5

BYE: Bears, Detroit, PACKERS, Minnesota
Sunday, Oct. 1
Atlanta 30, New England 17
Miami 26, Cincinnati 23
Tampa Bay 20, Carolina 13
Philadelphia 15, New Orleans 10
Washington 27, Dallas 23
Indianapolis 21, St. Louis 18
Kansas City 24, Arizona 3
Jacksonville 17, Houston 16
Seattle 27, Denver 10
Pittsburgh 31, San Diego 16
San Francisco 20, N.Y. Giants 6
Oakland 47, N.Y. Jets 10
Monday, Oct. 2
Buffalo 22, Cleveland 19

Week 6

BYE: Atlanta, New Orleans, St. Louis, San Francisco
Sunday, Oct. 8
Dallas 34, **PACKERS** 24
Bears 31, Carolina 27
Buffalo 29, N.Y. Jets 10
Philadelphia 37, Washington 34, OT
Minnesota 23, Houston 17, OT
Indianapolis 27, Miami 24, OT
N.Y. Giants 27, Arizona 21, OT
Denver 37, New England 3
Tampa Bay 19, Cincinnati 16
Jacksonville 20, Pittsburgh 16
Detroit 38, Cleveland 20
Oakland 34, Seattle 14
Monday, Oct. 9
Kansas City 29, San Diego 23, OT

Week 7

BYE: Cleveland, Cincinnati, Houston, Pittsburgh
Thursday, Oct. 12
St. Louis 21, Atlanta 19
Sunday, Oct. 15
PACKERS 30, Detroit 21
Kansas City 31, New England 26
Tampa Bay 20, Minnesota 17, OT
Chicago 30, Jacksonville 27
Carolina 26, N.Y. Jets 15
Dallas 23, San Diego 9
Buffalo 27, Seattle 21
Philadelphia 17, N.Y. Giants 14
Indianapolis 18, San Francisco 17
New Orleans 33, Miami 30
Arizona 24, Washington 20
Monday, Oct. 16
Denver 27, Oakland 0

Week 8

BYE: Arizona, Dallas, N.Y. Giants, Philadelphia
Thursday, Oct. 19
Cincinnati 27, Pittsburgh 9
Sunday, Oct. 22
PACKERS 38, Minnesota 21
Chicago 35, Houston 32
N.Y. Jets 17, Miami 16
Carolina 20, New Orleans 3
Atlanta 24, Tampa Bay 21
Kansas City 21, Denver 7
Oakland 30, Indianapolis 17
San Diego 35, Seattle 25
Jacksonville 23, Cleveland 15
Washington 36, Detroit 30, OT
San Francisco 44, St. Louis 10
Monday, Oct. 23
New England 27, Buffalo 14

Week 9

BYE: Denver, Kansas City, Los Angeles, San Diego
Sunday, Oct. 29
Detroit 24, **PACKERS** 16
Indianapolis 17, N.Y. Jets 10
Dallas 28, Atlanta 13
Carolina 20, New England 17, OT
Arizona 20, Seattle 14, OT
Houston 19, Tampa Bay 7
Pittsburgh 24, Jacksonville 7
Cleveland 29, Cincinnati 26, OT
Philadelphia 20, St. Louis 9
Miami 23, Buffalo 6
New Orleans 11, San Francisco 7
N.Y. Giants 24, Washington 15
Monday, Oct. 30
Bears 14, Minnesota 6

Week 10

BYE: Jacksonville, Tampa Bay
Sunday, Nov. 5
Minnesota 27, **PACKERS** 24
Houston 37, Cleveland 10
New Orleans 19, St. Louis 10
Oakland 20, Cincinnati 17
Pittsburgh 37, Chicago 34, OT
Denver 38, Arizona 6
Miami 24, San Diego 14
New England 20, N.Y. Jets 7
Atlanta 34, Detroit 22
Kansas City 24, Washington 3
Buffalo 16, Indianapolis 10
Carolina 13, San Francisco 7
Seattle 30, N.Y. Giants 28
Monday, Nov. 6
Dallas 34, Philadelphia 12

Week 11

BYE: N.Y. Jets, Washington
Sunday, Nov. 12
PACKERS 35, Chicago 28
Oakland 17, N.Y. Giants 13
New England 34, Miami 17
Seattle 47, Jacksonville 30
Detroit 27, Tampa Bay 24
San Francisco 38, Dallas 20
Philadelphia 31, Denver 13
New Orleans 17, Indianapolis 14
Buffalo 23, Atlanta 17
Cincinnati 32, Houston 25
St. Louis 28, Carolina 17
Kansas City 22, San Diego 7
Minnesota 30, Arizona 24, OT
Monday, Nov. 13
Pittsburgh 20, Cleveland 3

Week 12

Sunday, Nov. 19
PACKERS 31, Cleveland 20
Tampa Bay 17, Jacksonville 16
Pittsburgh 49, Cincinnati 31
Carolina 27, Arizona 7
Detroit 24, Chicago 17
Buffalo 28, N.Y. Jets 26
Minnesota 43, New Orleans 24
Seattle 27, Washington 20
Indianapolis 24, New England 10
Atlanta 31, St. Louis 6
Philadelphia 28, N.Y. Giants 19
Denver 30, San Diego 27
Dallas 34, Oakland 21
Kansas City 20, Houston 13
Monday, Nov. 20
San Francisco 40, Miami 20

Week 13

Thursday, Nov. 23
Detroit 44, Minnesota 38
Dallas 24, Kansas City 12
Sunday, Nov. 26
PACKERS 35, Tampa Bay 13
New England 35, Buffalo 25
Chicago 27, N.Y. Giants 24
Houston 42, Denver 33
Pittsburgh 20, Cleveland 17
Arizona 40, Atlanta 37, OT
Indianapolis 36, Miami 28
Cincinnati 17, Jacksonville 13
Philadelphia 14, Washington 7
N.Y. Jets 16, Seattle 10
San Francisco 41, St. Louis 13
New Orleans 34, Carolina 26
Monday, Nov. 27
Oakland at San Diego ..... 8 p.m.

Week 14

Thursday, Nov. 30
N.Y. Giants at Arizona ..... 7 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 3
Cincinnati at **PACKERS** ..... Noon
Indianapolis at Carolina ..... Noon
Houston at Pittsburgh ..... Noon
Atlanta at Miami ..... Noon
New Orleans at New England ..... Noon
St. Louis at N.Y. Jets ..... Noon
Tampa Bay at Minnesota ..... Noon
Jacksonville at Denver ..... 3 p.m.
Kansas City at Oakland ..... 3 p.m.
Cleveland at San Diego ..... 3 p.m.
Washington at Dallas ..... 3 p.m.
Philadelphia at Seattle ..... 3 p.m.
Buffalo at San Francisco ..... 7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 4
Bears at Detroit ..... 8 p.m.

Week 15

Saturday, Dec. 9
Cleveland at Minnesota ..... 11:30 a.m.
Arizona at San Diego ..... 3 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 10
PACKERS at Tampa Bay ..... 7 p.m.
Bears at Cincinnati ..... Noon
Buffalo at St. Louis ..... Noon
N.Y. Jets at New England ..... Noon
Indianapolis at Jacksonville ..... Noon
New Orleans at Atlanta ..... Noon
San Francisco at Carolina ..... Noon
Dallas at Philadelphia ..... Noon
Detroit at Houston ..... Noon
Seattle at Denver ..... 3 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Oakland ..... 3 p.m.
Washington at N.Y. Giants ..... 3 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 12
Kansas City at Miami ..... 8 p.m.

Week 16

Saturday, Dec. 16
New England at Pittsburgh ..... 11:30 a.m.
PACKERS at New Orleans ..... 3 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 17
Tampa Bay at Bears ..... Noon
Jacksonville at Detroit ..... Noon
Miami at Buffalo ..... Noon
Cincinnati at Cleveland ..... Noon
N.Y. Jets at Houston ..... Noon
Atlanta at Carolina ..... Noon
Arizona at Philadelphia ..... Noon
Washington at St. Louis ..... Noon
Denver at Kansas City ..... 3 p.m.
San Diego at Indianapolis ..... 3 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Dallas ..... 3 p.m.
Oakland at Seattle ..... 7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 18
Minnesota at San Francisco ..... 8 p.m.

Week 17

Saturday, Dec. 23
San Diego at N.Y. Giants ..... 11:30 a.m.
Detroit at Tampa Bay ..... 3 p.m.
New England at Indianapolis ..... 7 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 24
Pittsburgh at **PACKERS** ..... Noon
Philadelphia at Bears ..... Noon
Houston at Buffalo ..... Noon
Seattle at Kansas City ..... Noon
Cleveland at Jacksonville ..... Noon
San Francisco at Atlanta ..... Noon
New Orleans at N.Y. Jets ..... Noon
Minnesota at Cincinnati ..... Noon
Carolina at Washington ..... 3 p.m.
Denver at Oakland ..... 3 p.m.
Miami at St. Louis ..... 3 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 25
Dallas at Arizona ..... 8 p.m.

Diamond or a bust?

Rookie sets feature past year's best

By Barry Shuck

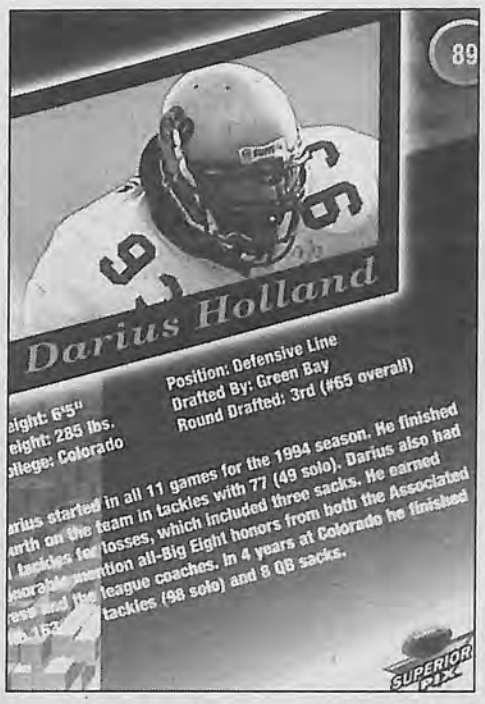
One surefire entity that football card collectors love are rookie cards. The unknown potential of each rookie with the prospect that any first-year player could develop into that one, ultimate superstar brings about an almost passionate excitement to the collector.

Unknown potential is the key phrase here. For every first round bust, like Tony Mandarich in 1989, there is that diamond in the rough lurking about in places even NFL scouts did not foresee. Like Brett Favre, a second round selection; Denver's Karl Mecklenburg, a 12th rounder; Dan Marino, the sixth QB taken in the '83 draft; or even the undrafted players like former Cowboy/Giant Everson Walls.

With this in mind, a football card set dedicated entirely to rookies is seemingly a collector's paradise.

Superior Pix, last season known as Superior Rookies, has unveiled a 110-card set entitled '95 Draft Pix Series that has almost every big-gun from the '94 college football season pictured in their collegiate uniforms.

"Our goal was to produce a set of the past year's best college players," says Tracy Chan, managing partner of Superior Pix. "We made a list of who we thought was the best, and then went out and signed most of them. Other players were available to us, but we used our list as a measuring stick and were very successful at acquiring the players we wanted."



Two big-gun rookies on Superior Pix include the Packers' Darius Holland, left, and Craig Newsome.

The 110-card set includes 25 first-round selections and 16 second-rounders. Prominent first-rounders include Steve McNair, Michael Westbrook, Kerry Collins and Rashaan Salaam while several second-round blossoms are Frank Sanders, Bobby Taylor and Terrell Fletcher.

Superior Pix has taken the excitement of an all-rookie set one step further by inserting into every 8-card pack one autographed card, a collector friendly idea. Think about it, for a suggested retail price of about $5, you will receive an authentic signature football card of an NFL future star. Will this year's checklist enfold the next Marshall Faulk or Drew Bledsoe? These same caliber players could very well be lurking in this '95 version complete with autographed cards.

Each card in the base set contains full-bleed borders and the player's name gold-foiled stamped across the lower right of the card front. The card back sports an additional photo as well as a biography and his NFL team.

There are four chrome-foil insert sets: Instant Impact, Open Field, Top Defender and Deep Threat. In addition, there is a mail-in chrome-foil sub-set involving Tyrone Wheatley exclusively.

Instant Impact is a five-card set that depicts each player against a three-color background that rainbows when tilted. McNair, Collins, Wheatley, Joey Galloway and Tony Boselli comprise this group. Open Field uses a speckled rainbow backdrop featuring Ki-Jana Carter, Wheatley, James O. Stewart, Ray Zellars and Salaam. The Top Defender insert set portrays either Derrick Brooks, Warren Sapp, Kevin Carter, Derrick Alexander or Mike Mamula against a woodgrain backdrop in which the players seem to glow.

Deep Threat is an awesome looking card. Each player is superimposed onto a football and the background bursts with rays and speckles of rainbow colors.

Included are Sanders, Westbrook, Stokes, Galloway and also Kyle Brady.

Packers included in the base set are Brian Williams (#8), Craig Newsome (#57) and Darius Holland (#89).

Each player signed a disparate number of cards that are randomly inserted, which should make certain players' autographed cards even more collectible. Ki-Jana Carter and Stokes only penned 1,000 each while McNair, Collins and Rob Johnson signed 3,000 each. All of the remaining players committed to around 4,000-5,000 each. The Packers' Newsome autographed 4,000.

Barry Shuck's column on collectibles appears bi-weekly in the Packer Report. Readers are invited to submit questions or comments on card collecting to Shuck at P.O. Box 646, Bagdad, Fla. 32530.

Ask Barry

Dear Barry,

I have an autographed color 8x10 photo of Vince Lombardi, taken during the glory years. The photo was processed by Pohlmann's who take all Packer team photos. I am at a loss as to what the value may be.

Rudi Hermann
N. Ft. Meyers, Fla.

What you have is quite a valuable collectible piece. Lombardi is considered the greatest NFL coach of all time, with all due respects to Don Shula. Back in those days, autographs were not considered a valuable commodity as with today's market. Add this to the fact that 'coach' is gone forever and only a certain number of his signatures are out there. Plus, this is at least a 30-year-old collectible.

An autographed football of Vince would probably bring just under $2,000. Your photo is valued between $400 and $600. Any Packer die-hard would surely love to add this piece to their collection.

Hermann is interested in disposing of this item and can be reached at (941) 731-6806.

– Barry Shuck

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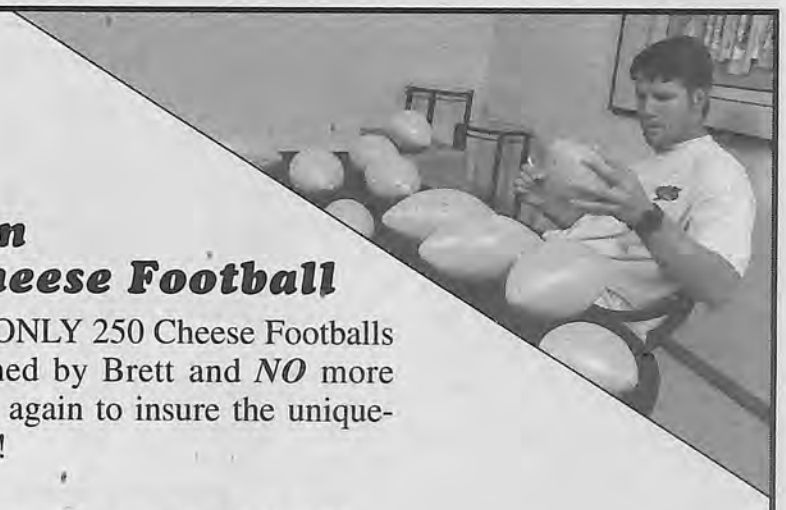

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Football's been a hit for safety

Prior skips the 'show' for the 'league'

By Tim Froberg

"Put me in coach; I'm ready to play, today. Look at me, I can be, centerfield"
– from 'Centerfield' by John Fogerty

Being a tough, time-tested National Football League veteran of 10 years, Mike Prior knows how to hit.

What most people don't know about Prior is that he can deliver a hit not only with his shoulder pads, but with a baseball bat as well. And his knowledge of strike zones is nearly as keen as his grasp of zone coverages.

The steady, heady Packer safety will never be confused with Deion Sanders, but like Sanders, Prior was blessed with the rare "Prime Time" ability and opportunity to play two professional sports.

Prior

Prior, however, has confined his occupation to the NFL even though he had repeated chances to turn pro in baseball. The easy-going Chicago Heights (Ill.) native was drafted three times by different major league teams, but rejected all the respective offers to pursue an NFL career.

A peek at Prior's baseball resume reveals why baseball teams were so eager to lure him away from football. A right-handed-hitting centerfielder who was also an emergency pitcher, Prior finished a three-year collegiate baseball career (1983-85) as Illinois State's all-time leading hitter with a .388 batting average. The sturdy 6-foot-0, 208-pound Prior intrigued scouts with an impressive package of power and speed, clubbing 32 career home runs, while stealing 55 bases.

"I could hit for average, but I could hit the long ball too and that's what major league teams were looking for," said Prior. "What I really loved was getting a jump on a pitcher and stealing a base."

Mike Prior starred in baseball at Illinois State from 1983-85.

Prior was first drafted by the Baltimore Orioles in the 17th round of the 1984 baseball draft after his junior season at Illinois State. A year later, the Los Angeles Dodgers selected him in the fourth round of the '85 draft after Prior pounded a school-record 19 home runs. However, Prior had been chosen a few weeks earlier by Tampa Bay in the seventh round of the '85 NFL draft and was already preparing for his rookie season. After saying no to baseball for the second time, Prior was chosen in the fifth round of the 1986 winter draft by the Houston Astros, but once again passed on an offer since he felt he needed to make a total commitment to football.

Starts with Bucs

Prior, a three time Division I-AA All-American in football at Illinois State, spent all of his rookie season in the NFL (1985) with the Buccaneers. But his decision to bypass baseball appeared questionable when the Bucs waived him during training camp of '86 and he spent the entire year out of football.

"In hindsight, heck, maybe I should have went to camp for the Astros (1986) because the Bucs ended up cutting me anyway," chuckled Prior. "I could have gotten a few cracks in during spring training, but that doesn't bother me."

Photo by James V. Biever

Packers safety Mike Prior turned down three offers to play professional baseball in order to play in the National Football League.

Prior signed with Indianapolis in February of 1987, but was waived Aug. 31 on the final cutdown. However, he was re-signed by the Colts three weeks later and his NFL career took off. Prior played in the team's final 13 games, starting seven of them, and made a major impact with six interceptions.

Prior spent the next five seasons with Indianapolis – all as a starter – and was a ballhawk in the secondary with 21 interceptions in that span to finish with 27 career pickoffs for the Colts, sixth-highest in team history.

Valuable role with Pack

This is Prior's third season in Green Bay after signing with the club as a free agent in 1993. A sound tackler and a savvy, assignment-sure veteran, Prior has been primarily a backup with the Packers, but has been valuable in nickel and dime packages as well as on special teams.

Although baseball salaries have generally succeeded NFL wages in recent years, Prior is satisfied with his choice and it's turned out to be a good one. Few players have been able to last a full decade in the NFL like Prior and he's made millions, while enjoying a productive career without experiencing any major injuries.

"No, I don't really look back and say, 'well, I could have had a baseball career," said Prior. "I know I could have and believe I would have made it to the majors. From a physical standpoint, baseball's easier to play day in and day out, and there's more money in baseball. But money's a secondary thing and you gotta enjoy what you're doing. I'm happy playing football and it's been good to me financially."

Married with children

A married man with three daughters

SEE PRIOR PAGE 19

Prior

CONTINUED FROM 18

ranging in age from five to nine, Prior added that family life was also a factor in his decision to stick with football.

"I wanted a family lifestyle and football's more conducive to that," he said. "You have at least six months during the off-season to be with your family and don't have all the long road trips during the season."

One sport at a time

Despite the success of dual-sport, football-baseball performers such as Sanders and Bo Jackson, Prior said he never considered trying to play both professionally at the same time.

"I really liked doing both in college because they were such different sports and it kept you fresh mentally," Prior said. "I love to play baseball. I'd sit in the batting cage for an hour until my hands were bleeding. It was so much fun.

"But I'd never want to try to split it up professionally like that. You're taking away from one sport if you do that and I never felt like I had so much ability that I could afford to do that."

The 32-year-old Prior still swings a lethal bat during the off-season, but has switched to softball and plays purely for fun in recreational leagues.

"I have a blast playing during the summer," said Prior. "It's so much fun. I love the game. Sure, sometimes, you think, 'what if.' But the NFL's a dream come true too and I certainly can't knock it."

Prior won't knock his decision, but as his college statistics indicate, he can knock the cover off a baseball.

Tim Froberg covers the Packers for the Marinette EagleHerald.

Prior file

Name: Michael Robert Prior
Position: Safety
Acquired: Signed on as an unrestricted free agent with Green Bay in 1993.
Height: 6-0
Weight: 208
Age: 32 (Nov. 14, 1963)
Hometown: Born in Chicago Heights, Ill. Resides in Indianapolis, Ind.
School: Illinois State University, Normal, Ill.
Pro: Third on the team in special teams tackles (10) and had 21 total tackles as a backup at free safety through 11 games this season. Led team in special teams tackles in 1994 with 17, the most he had contributed since making 21 in 1987 with the Colts. Saw action in all 16 games in 1993 in first season with Green Bay. Finished the year with 36 total tackles (32 solo), 12th on the club. Led Green Bay in punt returns, averaging 11.4 yards on 17 returns and was fourth on club with 12 special teams tackles. Had a career-high 113 tackles (81 solo), 3 interceptions and 15 passes defensed in 1990.
College: Four-year starter (1981-84) at Illinois State and a three-time Division I-AA All-American at safety. Was school's all-time batting average leader (.388).
High school: Won four letters each in football, wrestling and baseball at Marian High School in Chicago Heights, Ill.

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NBC

RADIO
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THE SERIES
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LAST TIME
Quarterback Brett Favre rallied the Packers past the Bengals, 24-23 on Sept. 20, 1992.

DID YOU KNOW?
Paul Brown picked the name Bengals for Cincinnati's football team in 1968 "to give it a link with past professional football in Cincinnati." From 1937-41, the Bengals were a famous unit in the Cincinnati area. In 1938, they played three teams from the National Football League. The most popular name suggested by fans was Buckeyes, but it was rejected for obvious reasons.

Bengals' defense has been struggling

By Laura Veras Marran

When the Cincinnati Bengals trot on to Lambeau Field Sunday, Brett Favre may become a little wistful.

After all, it was against the Bengals at Lambeau Field that Favre had his "coming out party" as Packer quarterback.

The date was Sept. 20, 1992, and Favre was on the brink of replacing the incumbent Don Majkowski as the starting quarterback. A week earlier, Favre had replaced Majkowski in a blowout loss to Tampa Bay.

First-year coach Mike Holmgren opted to stick with Majkowski as the starter against the Bengals but the "Majik Man" only attempted two passes before injuring his ankle.

The Bengals led 17-3 after three quarters before Favre staged the first of his many fourth-quarter rallies.

Favre engineered two touchdown drives in the final eight minutes to pull out a dramatic 24-23 victory. Favre gave the Packers the lead with a 35-yard scoring strike to Kitrick Taylor with 13 seconds left in the game.

Since that game, the Packers and Bengals have gone in different directions. The Packers and Favre have evolved into playoff-caliber performers while the Bengals bottomed out and are trying to fight their way back to respectability under coach David Shula.

OFFENSE: The Bengals seem to have the cornerstones in place to build a winner just as the Packers did in 1992.

Like the Packers, the Bengals have a young and talented quarterback in Jeff Blake, who will be in Cincinnati for a while after signing a contract extension earlier this season.

Just as the Packers had Sterling Sharpe in 1992, the Bengals have an elite receiver

of their own in Carl Pickens.

Blake and Pickens will probably be the focal point of the Packer defense.

The strong-armed Blake found Pickens a AFC-high 68 times for 863 yards and a conference-leading 14 touchdowns through 11 games. Pickens is bolstered by Tony McGee, who racked up 552 receiving yards through 11 games, and Darnay Scott.

The Bengals' running game was supposed to struggle after losing top draft pick Ki-Jana Carter for the year with a knee injury in the preseason. Veteran Harold Green has performed admirably, gaining 500 yards while averaging about four yards a carry through 11 games.

The combination of Blake and his receivers and an adequate running game allowed the Bengals to rank second in points scored after Week 11.

DEFENSE: The Bengals have struggled this season on defense.

Following their 49-31 loss to Pittsburgh Nov. 19, the Bengals were last in the AFC in total defense and were giving up an average of 30 points a game.

There is talent on the Bengal defense, though, especially on the defensive line. Defensive tackle "Big Daddy" Dan Wilkinson (6-foot-5, 300 pounds) was the top pick in the draft out of Ohio State two years ago.

Defensive end John Copeland was the most productive member of the Bengal line through the first half of the season. The 6-3, 286-pound Alabama product was among the AFC leaders with seven sacks.

Safety Bracy Walker anchors the secondary. He had a team-high three interceptions through 11 games.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Statistically, special teams were a Bengal strength through 11 games. Lee Johnson was among the AFC leaders in punting average and near the top in net average. Doug Pelfry was one of the AFC's most accurate kickers through Week 11. He was perfect in 26 extra-point attempts and was 21 of 26 on field goals with a long boot of 49 yards.

Laura Veras Marran covers the Packers for the Kenosha News.

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MLB — 58 Tovar, 91 Wallerstedt, 57 Jefferson
LLB — 56 McDonald, 55 Collins

RE — 70 Smith, 98 Kelly
RT — 95 Rucker, 67 Oelhoffen, 96 Oglesby
LT — 99 Wilkinson, 70 Smith, 96 Oglesby
LE — 92 Copeland, 79 Stallings

WR — 82 Ingram, 81 Morgan, 85 Mickens
LT — 75 Ruettgers, 71 Brown
LG — 73 Taylor, 63 Timmerman
C — 52 Winters, 50 Arthur
RG — 76 Galbreath, 63 Timmerman, 65 Knapp
RT — 72 Dotson, 71 Brown, 65 Knapp
TE — 89 Chmura, 88 Jackson, 83 Thomason

RB — 34 Bennett, 42 Johnson, 32 Jervey
QB — 4 Favre, 12 Rubley, 16 Gagliano
FB — 25 Levens, 30 Henderson, 29 Wilson
WR — 87 Brooks, 86 Freeman, 80 Jordan

WHEN THE BENGALS HAVE THE BALL

RCB — 33 Evans, 45 Crawford, 28 Mullen
FS — 31 Teague, 39 Prior
SS — 36 Butler, 39 Prior
LCB — 21 Newsome, 22 McGill, 23 Dorsett

RLB — 53 Koonce, 57 Kelly, 51 Williams
MLB — 57 Kelly, 54 Harris, 55 Strickland
LLB — 59 Simmons, 54 Harris

RE — 96 Jones, 98 Wilkins, 91 Clavelle
NT — 64 Jurkovic, 94 Kuberski
LT — 93 Gi. Brown, 90 Holland, 98 Wilkins
LE — 92 White, 97 LaBounty

WR — 81 Pickens, 80 Dunn, 18 Bailey
LT — 77 Sargent, 75 Brown
LG — 72 Brumfield, 75 Brown, 76 Pollard
C — 65 Brilz, 66 Jones, 77 Sargent
RG — 62 Kalis, 76 Pollard
RT — 63 Walter, 81 Tuten, 77 Sargent
TE — 82 McGee, 88 Ware, 87 Sadowski, 61 Tuten

RB — 28 Green, 21 Bieniemy, 38 Burns
QB — 8 Blake, 7 Klingler, 10 Walsh
FB — 29 Cothran, 36 Joseph
WR — 86 Scott, 84 Hill, 18 Bailey

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Packers roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College
4	Brett Favre	QB	6-2	225	25	5	Southern Miss.
12	T.J. Rubley	QB	6-4	212	26	4	Tulsa
13	Chris Jacke	K	6-0	205	29	7	Texas-El Paso
17	Craig Hentrich	P	6-3	200	24	2	Notre Dame
18	Doug Pederson	QB	6-3	212	27	3	Northeast La.
21	Craig Newsome	CB	6-0	188	24	R	Arizona State
22	Lenny McGill	CB	6-2	198	24	2	Arizona State
23	Matthew Dorsett	CB	5-11	187	22	R	Southern
25	Dorsey Levens	FB	6-1	240	25	2	Georgia Tech
28	Roderick Mullen	DB	6-1	204	22	R	Grambling
29	Marcus Wilson	RB	6-1	215	27	4	Virginia
30	William Henderson	FB	6-2	248	24	R	North Carolina
31	George Teague	S	6-1	195	24	3	Alabama
32	Travis Jervey	RB	6-0	225	23	R	The Citadel
33	Doug Evans	CB	6-1	190	25	3	Louisiana Tech
34	Edgar Bennett	RB	6-0	217	26	4	Florida State
36	Leroy Butler	S	6-0	200	27	6	Florida State
39	Mike Prior	S	6-0	208	31	10	Illinois State
42	LeShon Johnson	RB	5-11	195	24	2	Northern Illinois
45	Keith Crawford	CB	6-2	198	24	2	Howard Payne
50	Mike Arthur	C	6-3	280	27	5	Texas A & M
51	Brian Williams	LB	6-2	240	22	R	Southern Cal.
52	Frank Winters	C	6-3	295	31	9	Western Illinois
53	George Koonce	LB	6-1	243	26	4	East Carolina
54	Bernardo Harris	LB	6-2	243	23	1	North Carolina
55	Fred Strickland	LB	6-2	250	29	8	Purdue
57	Joe Kelly	LB	6-2	235	30	10	Washington
59	Wayne Simmons	LB	6-3	248	25	3	Clemson
63	Adam Timmerman	G	6-4	288	24	R	So. Dakota St.
64	John Jurkovic	NT	6-2	295	28	4	Eastern Illinois
65	Lindsay Knapp	G/T	6-6	290	25	3	Notre Dame
68	Joe Sims	T	6-3	310	26	5	Nebraska
71	Gary Brown	T	6-4	315	24	2	Georgia Tech
72	Earl Dotson	T	6-4	310	24	3	Texas A & I
73	Aaron Taylor	G	6-4	305	22	2	Notre Dame
75	Ken Ruettgers	T	6-6	292	33	11	Southern Cal.
76	Harry Galbreath	G	6-1	295	30	8	Tennessee
80	Charles Jordan	WR	5-10	183	25	3	Long Beach
81	Anthony Morgan	WR	6-1	200	27	5	Tennessee
82	Mark Ingram	WR	5-11	194	30	9	Michigan State
83	Jeff Thomason	TE	6-5	250	25	3	Oregon
85	Terry Mickens	WR	6-1	198	24	2	Florida A & M
86	Antonio Freeman	WR	6-1	187	23	R	Virginia Tech
87	Robert Brooks	WR	6-0	180	25	4	South Carolina
88	Keith Jackson	TE	6-2	258	30	8	Oklahoma
89	Mark Chmura	TE	6-5	250	26	4	Boston College
90	Darius Holland	DT	6-5	305	21	R	Colorado
91	Shannon Clavelle	DE	6-3	287	21	R	Colorado
92	Reggie White	DE	6-5	300	33	11	Tennessee
93	Gilbert Brown	NT	6-2	325	24	3	Kansas
94	Bob Kuberski	NT	6-5	300	24	1	Navy
96	Sean Jones	DE	6-7	283	32	12	Northeastern
97	Matt LaBounty	DE	6-4	278	26	3	Oregon
98	Gabe Wilkins	DT	6-5	310	24	2	Gardner-Webb
	PRACTICE SQUAD						
10	Mike McCoy	QB	6-2	204	23	R	University of Utah
20	Charlie Simmons	WR	6-3	210	22	R	Georgia-Tech
46	Reggie Holt	S	5-11	198	24	1	Wisconsin
56	Robert Bass	LB	6-1	239	25	2	Miami (Fla.)
58	Randy Neal	LB	6-3	236	22	R	Virginia
	INJURED RESERVE (OUT FOR SEASON)						
11	Ty Detmer	QB	6-0	194	27	4	Brigham Young
38	Brian Satterfield	FB	6-0	225	25	1	N. Alabama
48	Mike Bartrum	TE	6-5	243	25	2	Marshall
67	Paul Hutchins	T	6-5	330	25	3	Western Mich.
70	Jeff Miller	T	6-4	295	22	R	Mississippi

Bengals roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Age	Exp.	College
7	David Klinger	QB	6-2	205	27	4	Houston
8	Jeff Blake	QB	6-0	202	24	4	East Carolina
9	Doug Pelfrey	K	5-11	185	25	3	Kentucky
10	John Walsh	QB	6-4	215	22	R	BYU
11	Lee Johnson	P	6-2	200	34	11	BYU
18	Thomas Bailey	WR	6-0	196	23	R	Auburn
21	Eric Bieniemy	RB	5-7	198	26	5	Colorado
23	Corey Sawyer	CB	5-11	171	23	2	Florida State
24	Roger Jones	CB	5-9	175	26	5	Tennessee State
25	Rod Jones	CB	6-0	185	31	10	SMU
27	Bracey Walker	S	5-11	200	25	2	North Carolina
28	Harold Green	RB	6-2	222	27	6	South Carolina
29	Jeff Cothran	FB	6-1	249	23	2	Ohio State
30	Chirs Shelling	CB	5-10	180	22	R	Auburn
31	Darryl Williams	S	6-0	191	25	4	Miami (Fla.)
35	Sam Shade	S	6-1	191	22	R	Alabama
36	James Joseph	RB	6-2	222	27	5	Auburn
37	Leonard Wheeler	S	5-11	189	26	4	Troy State
38	Jason Burns	RB	5-7	195	22	R	Wisconsin
43	Mike Brim	CB	6-0	192	29	8	Virginia Union
45	Adrian Hardy	CB	5-11	194	25	3	Northwestern St. (La.)
55	Andre Collins	LB	6-1	231	27	6	Penn State
56	Ricardo McDonald	LB	6-2	235	26	4	Pittsburgh
57	Kevin Jefferson	LB	6-2	232	21	2	Lehigh
58	Steve Tovar	LB	6-3	244	25	3	Ohio State
59	Greg Truitt	LB	6-0	235	29	2	Penn State
61	Melvin Tuten	T	6-6	305	23	R	Sryacuse
62	Todd Kalis	G	6-6	296	30	8	Arizona State
63	Joe Walter	T	6-7	292	32	11	Texas Tech
64	Bruce Kozerski	T	6-4	287	33	12	Holy Cross
65	Darrick Brilz	C	6-3	287	31	9	Oregon State
66	Dan Jones	T	6-7	298	25	3	Maine
67	Kimo Von Oelhoffen	DT	6-4	300	24	2	Boise State
70	Artie Smith	DE	6-4	285	25	3	Louisiana Tech
72	Scott Brumfield	G	6-8	320	25	3	BYU
75	Anthony Brown	T	6-6	310	22	R	Utah
76	Trent Pollard	G	6-4	330	22	2	E. Washington
77	Kevin Sargent	T	6-6	284	26	4	E. Washington
79	Ramondo Stallings	DE	6-7	285	23	2	San Diego State
80	David Dulnn	WR	6-3	210	23	R	Fresno State
81	Carl Pickens	WR	6-2	206	25	4	Tennessee
82	Tony McGee	TE	6-3	246	24	3	Michigan
84	Jeff Hill	WR	5-11	178	22	1	Purdue
86	Darnay Scott	WR	6-1	180	22	2	San Diego State
87	Troy Sadowski	TE	6-5	250	29	7	Georgia
88	Derek Ware	TE	6-2	255	26	4	Central St. (Ohio)
91	Brett Wallerstedt	LB	6-1	240	24	3	Arizona State
92	John Copeland	DE	6-3	286	24	3	Alabama
95	Keith Rucker	DT	6-4	332	26	4	Ohio Wesleyan
96	Alfred Oglesby	DT	6-4	290	28	6	Houston
98	Todd Kelly	DE	6-2	259	24	3	Tennessee
99	Dan Wilkinson	DT	6-5	313	22	2	Ohio State
	PRACTICE SQUAD						
16	David Rhodes	WR	6-1	200	23	R	Central Florida
20	Bryan Dickerson	RB	6-1	245	22	R	Eastern Kentucky
60	Fritz Fequiere	G	6-2	295	23	R	Iowa
78	Ray Forsythe	G	6-3	310	23	R	Central Florida
	INJURED RESERVE (OUT FOR SEASON)						
32	Ki-Jana Carter	RB	5-10	227	22	R	Penn State
50	James Francis	LB	6-5	252	27	6	Baylor
65	Tim McGee	WR	5-10	183	31	10	Tennessee
74	Rich Braham	T	6-4	295	25	2	West Virginia
90	Gerald Collins	LB	6-3	250	24	R	Vanderbilt

A day to remember

Favre takes hold of offense, rallies Pack past Bengals

By Brett Christopherson

In just a matter of a split second, the entire future of the Green Bay Packers took a turn for the better.

After a pair of losses to start the 1992 season, including a dismal 31-3 setback at the hands of the lowly Tampa Bay Buccaneers a week earlier, fans had little reason to be excited as the Cincinnati Bengals invaded Lambeau Field on a sunny September afternoon.

However, to be fair, Green Bay was in a transition period since this was the first season under current head coach Mike Holmgren, who was instilling a new, complicated offensive system know as the "West Coast Offense" which some players compared to as learning Chinese arithmetic.

Despite all of the changes, there was still a sense that 1992 was going to be a long, boring season for the Green and Gold with the only excitement being next year's college draft and just how high the Packers' pick would be.

Just when apathy was starting to poke its ugly head over Lambeau Field and the Packer faithful, a dramatic turn of events woke Packerland up and turned its yawns into frenzied cheers.

In what seemed to be just an ordinary play, Bengal nose tackle Tim Krumrie broke through Green Bay's offensive line and got a hold of quarterback Don Majkowski, wrestling him down for a sack. But Krumrie's momentum forced the 275-pound defensive standout to fall on Majik's left ankle, tearing ligaments in the process and knocking Majkowski out of the game.

Photo by Chris Callies

Brett Favre gets knocked down here, but he got up and rallied the Packers past the Bengals in 1992.

"It felt like my leg was on fire," Majik said. "It was painful. I heard it pop, and I thought I broke it."

And that's when things changed forever because Majkowski's young backup, Brett Favre, took hold of the offensive reigns and hasn't let them loose since.

"I was shaking," Favre said about entering the game. "I felt like I took a laxative. Thank God I held it until afterward."

Yes, Favre did make it. And througout the course of the game, the Mississippi native with a cannon for a right arm, led the Packers – despite numerous early mistakes at the line of scrimmage – to a stunning and exciting come-from-behind 24-23 win, Holmgren's first triumph as a Packer coach.

"We got into some of the darndest formations I'd ever seen," said Holmgren. "But we started to settle down and good things started to happen."

Once Favre did relax and settle down, good things did indeed happen as he went on to complete 22 of 39 passes for 289 yards and two touchdowns. More importantly than those impressive statistics, however, was the fact Favre proved he could be a team leader, though not always by example.

"What you see in Brett is a young guy who loves to play," Holmgren said. "He'll drive you a little nuts some of the time and he'll make big plays some of the time. But he's a player. He certainly makes my life interesting."

After Majkowski's absence, the game was definitely a little more interesting though not at all successful. After struggling for most of the game, Favre found his groove in the fourth quarter – with a little help from an old "friend."

Trailing 17-3 with under 13 minutes to play, rookie holdout Terrell Buckley, making his debut as well, grabbed a punt and returned it 58 yards for an electrifying touchdown to close the gap to only seven points.

However, Cincinnati responded with a field goal minutes later to increase its lead to 10 before Favre led the offense on an 88-yard scoring drive capped off when wide receiver Sterling Sharpe caught a five-yard pass from Favre to make it 20-17.

But the Bengals answered again with another field goal to make it 23-17 with only 1:07 left in the game. Unless something amazing happened, it appeared the game was over and the Packers would have to wait another week in hopes of notching their first win of the season.

But as has been his trademark his entire career, the soft-spoken Favre delivered some big plays with the game on the line to muster out a win.

Starting at his own eight-yard line and with no time outs left, Favre managed to drive Green Bay down to Cincinnati's 35 with 13 seconds remaining and perhaps one last shot at victory.

Favre took the snap, pump faked, and let loose with a rocket down the right sideline which landed safely into the hands of wide receiver Kitrick Taylor for the game-tying touchdown. Chris Jacke added the game-winning extra point and Lambeau Field rocked and rolled the rest of the day.

"That last ball, I was scared I was going to throw it halfway up the stands," Favre said afterward. "I just closed my eyes and waited for the cheering.

Ever since that Sunday afternoon at Lambeau, the cheering hasn't stopped. Neither has Favre.

Brett Christopherson is a freelance writer from Menasha.

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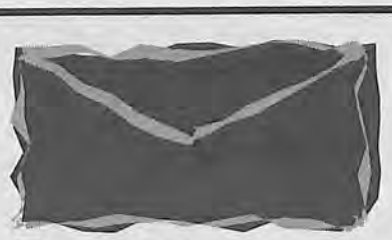

letters to the editor

Road warriors

Dear Packer Report,

I am honored to be a first time writer to the Report, coming off yet another exciting Packer road victory.

For the past five years, myself and a few longtime Wisconsin buddies "load it up" and make the trek to an away Packer game in cities unknown. Most recently, we embarked on Jacksonville and were greeted with unsurpassed hospitality and a Packer "W." It is amazing to witness first hand the Packer faithful (10,000 strong) that come from all over the country to give their undying support of America's Team. This year's trip was especially gratifying given the opportunity to meet and talk with Fuzzy Thurston at the well organized golf outing and Jacksonville Beach Party. It is truly hard to imagine a better way to spend a few days than making the trip to a Packer away game.

I don't foresee this grand tradition of Road Trippin' coming to an end in the near future. From Chicago, Orlando, Raleigh, and Madison, each of us will make the commitment to meet in the chosen destination year after year. Maybe, just maybe, building on a solid foundation today, me and the boys will make the Super Bowl our final destination.

Bleeding Green and Gold,
Michael "Spike" Lawrence
Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

Great support

Dear Mr. Korth,

After reading your column about the Packer-Viking game at the Dome, I do not agree with your statement that there were 62,839 fans "roaring with approval" about T.J. Rubley's pass being intercepted by Jeff Brady. While your head-count may be correct, from my seat way up in the upper deck, I could see quite a number of Green and Gold fans and I am sure they were not screaming with "approval" at that time. Some of the noise was probably the groaning or something else unprintable coming from the numerous faithful Packer fans attending the game.

Sincerely yours,
Richard F. Worden
Appleton, Wis.

Editor's note: You're right. I fumbled the ball on that paragraph. There were many Packer fans in attendance for that Nov. 5 game, making it almost seem like a neutral site at times – until the end.

Classy organization

Dear Packer Report;

I'm 16, and I've followed the Packers religiously for as long as I can remember.

I'd like to talk about the state of the NFL. To me, the Browns fans seem somewhat like Packers fans. Like us, they are very passionate, sell out every game, and support the team-win or lose. If they move to Baltimore it will aid in ripping the league apart at the seams. What does that say to fans? It says that even if you support you team, we don't care. I'm glad the Packers are a community-owned team, and I'd never like to see them leave Green Bay. I'll bet luxury boxes are great to sit in, but the average fan can't afford them. And football fans mostly represent average Americans.

The Packers may not be the best team, but at least they treat the fans with respect. So when owners like Jerry Jones, Al Davis, and now Art Modell say they can make more money than the small-market Packers organization, just tell them there's one thing the Packers' organization has that they never will – class.

A Packer Backer stuck
in the toxic waste state,
Dave Olivieri
Haddonfield, N.J.

Give Sharpe credit

To suggest that the Packers are a better team without Sterling Sharpe, as Brett Favre and others have done, is ridiculous. You don't lose one of the greatest receivers ever to play the game and say you're better. What may be true is that the Packers have a better *game plan* (spreading the ball around) now that Sharpe is gone. Favre may not like Sharpe, but minimizing his contributions is wrong.

In addition, it is very misleading to compare Robert Brooks' statistics through 10 games with Sharpe's statistics last year to this point. The Packers rarely threw the ball downfield the first half of last year. When Mike Holmgren finally opened up the offense, I believe Sharpe had 16 touchdowns in the last six games. Robert Brooks *is* having a great year, but wouldn't the Packers be a better team with both Brooks and Sharpe?

Sincerely,
"Packer" Vince
Downers Grove, Ill.

Glad to be Rison-less

Dear Packer Report,

To see some free agents available at the beginning of the year, it makes you think the right choice could make you a contender. Andre Rison's availability looked to be that. When he signed with Cleveland, many sports writers picked the Browns to represent the AFC in the Super Bowl this season.

I'm glad this superstar chose Cleveland and not Green Bay. His attitude, statements directed toward fans and teammates would have been more than Green Bay could take. Thanks to his ego, LeRoy Butler was able to come up with a fantastic interception and return of 76 yards that stopped the Browns' drive (Nov. 19) and put the game away for good. Rison, upset that the ball from Vinny Testaverde wasn't right to him, stood out of bounds watching this great return. Glad to be Rison-less.

Mike Michalski
Beloit, Wis.

Requirements

Letters to the Packer Report are welcome, but must be limited to 350 words. They must be signed with a name, address and phone number. The Packer Report reserves the right to reject or edit letters. Writers are limited to one letter each 30 days. Typed letters can be faxed to (414) 497-6519, or send letters by conventional mail to:

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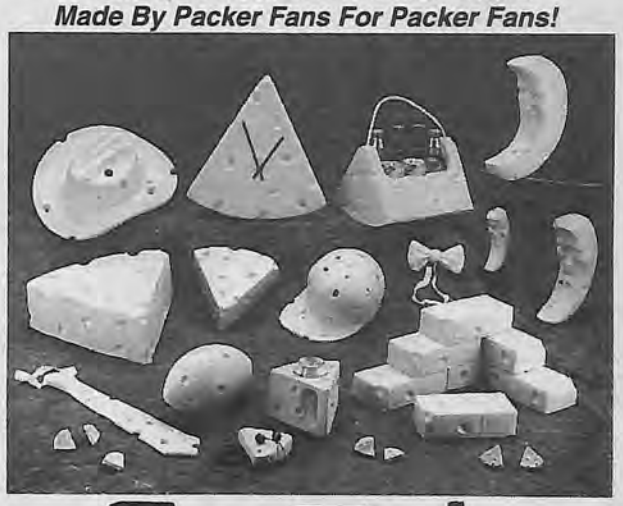

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Variety of activities in Tampa

By Jim Lyman

Packer fans hoping to escape winter when they visit Tampa for the Dec. 10 battle against the Buccaneers probably won't be disappointed. Tampa's average daytime high during the month is a pleasant 72 degrees.

Given that favorable forecast, fans staying in the area for a few days will probably want to consider more outdoor activities than merely sitting in "the Big Sombrero" during the Sunday evening Battle of the Bays.

Since Florida is rightly known as the Sunshine State, there are lots of those activities to choose from. Here are just some of the ways Packer backers can enjoy the outdoors during their stay in Tampa Bay.

Tampa attractions

Do attractions strike your fancy? In addition to the well-known complexes in Orlando – about 60 miles to the northeast – there are fascinating places located right in Tampa. It's the home of Busch Gardens; a 300-acre African-themed park and zoo. The wild and wooly Kumba roller coaster is one of the world's fastest and free samples of the brewmaster's product are also available. Contact (813) 987-5082 for details.

Lowry Park Zoo

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoological Gardens features all-natural animal habitats, including an enjoyable primate world exhibit. The Manatee and Aquatic Center and a Reptile Encounters area are also worth a look. Call the information line at (813) 932-0245.

Sunken Gardens

Just across Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg is the venerable Sunken Gardens attraction. It offers colorful botanical attractions as well as daily "Kachunga and the Alligator" and bird shows. Call (813) 896-3186.

Greyhound tracks, Jai-Alai

If working on a tan while you work to strike it rich has appeal, Tampa has several options available. The Tampa Greyhound Track has pari-mutual wagering, call (813) 932-4313, while Tampa Bay Downs – (813) 854-4238 – features thoroughbred racing as well as simulcast betting from tracks around the country. Although it's played indoors, Tampa Jai-Alai – the world's fastest game – provides white-hot action by talented players. And you can bet on it. Call (813) 831-1411 for details.

Cruise ships

You can also test your gaming skills while cruising the Gulf of Mexico. Empress Cruise Line ships set sail twice a day from nearby Treasure Island and Clearwater ports. The ships offer dining, dancing and casino gambling. Call (813) 895-3325 for more information.

Beaches

Gulf Coast beaches are rated among the world's best and many are easily accessible from Tampa. Clearwater Beach is a people watcher's paradise while Treasure Island has a municipal beach with the whitest sand on the west coast. Pass-a-Grille, on the south end of St. Pete Beach, is known for its scenic sea oats and sand dunes.

Golf

If December golf trips your trigger, you're certainly heading to the right place. Tampa alone has nearly 100 courses and there are dozens more in the immediate area.

The following courses will make advance tee times and accept daily fee play:

Located just minutes from Tampa, the Eagles Golf and Country Club in Odessa, provides 36 holes of excellent Florida golf. Four nines, The Oaks, The Lakes, The Forest and The Islands, each offer unique challenges. Reservations may be made four days in advance by calling (813) 920-6681.

The 18 holes at Tampa's Westchase Golf Club wind through acres of lakes, woods, conservation areas and upscale residential communities. The course also has an "aqua" driving range which allows you to hit golf balls to an "island green" situated in the middle of a large pond. Tee times are available three days in advance by calling (813) 854-2331.

You can even tee it up where the pros play with a round at the Tournament Players Club of Tampa Bay. One of the highest rated of the TPC's "stadium courses," it's the site of the annual GTE Suncoast Classic Senior PGA Tour event.

SEE TAMPA PAGE 27

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Tampa

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

For tee times up to seven days in advance, call the pro shop at (813) 949-0091.

Basketball

For college basketball fans, there will be a double-header the afternoon of Dec. 9 as part of the Thunderdome Shootout in St. Petersburg. Florida State will face DePaul at 1 p.m. followed by South Florida against George Washington at 3:30 p.m. Tickets are available through TicketMaster, or call (813) 895-8403 for more information.

Despite the many extracurricular activities available, chances are good the Green Bay-Tampa Bay game with its traditional and well-attended tailgate parties will remain the biggest attraction of all for the thousands of Packer fans who will gather at Tampa Stadium on Dec. 10.

Jim Lyman is a freelance writer from Lutz, Fla.

FAN CLUB CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	TICKET PRICE
Dec. 2	**Packer Eve Party** *at "The Bar" in Green Bay. Vic Ferrari to play*	9 PM band starts	$5 includes 1 beverage ticket
Dec. 3	*Cincinnati Bengals at Green Bay* **Tailgate**	10 AM to 11:30AM	Members Free / $10 general public
Dec. 10	*Green Bay Packers at Tampa* **Tailgate**	6 PM to 7:30PM	$12 per person / in advance
Dec. 16	*Green Bay Packers at New Orleans* **Tailgate** *at Superdome by gate C*	1 PM to 2:30PM	$22 per person
Dec. 23	**Packer Eve Party** *at "The Bar" in Green Bay. Kidd Gloves to play*	9 PM band starts	$5 includes 1 beverage ticket
Dec. 24	*Pittsburgh Steelers at Green Bay* **Tailgate**	10 AM to 11:30AM	Members Free / $10 general public
Feb. 4	**PRO BOWL TRIP**	**Diff. departure times**	**Call (800) 861-5585**

All America's Pack tailgate parties feature unlimited food and beverages plus exciting entertainment. Tailgate parties will be in a new location at Lambeau Field on the East side of the stadium underneath the Green Bay Packer sign. Join us at the fan club Packer Eve Parties held the night before the game at "The Bar" on Lime Kiln Road. Doors open at 8 PM, entertainment, field goal kicking contest and more. Home game tailgate tickets can be purchased at the gate the day of the game, away tailgate tickets can be purchased thru America's Pack at (414) 497-6500 ask for Debbie. For more information on any event call us at America's Pack. **America's Pack would like to thank our members for your continued support to America's Pack and the Green Bay Packers, THANK YOU!**

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Saw '39 championship game

SUPER FAN

I was raised at Eland, Wis., about 75 miles west of Green Bay. The first time I can remember being a Packer fan is about 1928. I moved away but came back to Milwaukee in 1937 and then saw all Milwaukee home games. How about old Charles "Buckets" Goldenberg? Then we'd go often to Green Bay and to Chicago when the Pack played the Bears.

I saw the 1939 championship game in Milwaukee and nearly froze. In 1942, I moved to Freeport, Ill. One day we drove in to see the Pack play the Bears and got caught in a snowstorm on the way home.

During the 1950s I was residing in Kansas, I used to get a fall subscription to the Green Bay Press-Gazette. I wrote in and bought some game tickets to one of the charity games even though I knew I couldn't attend, just to help the Pack through the tough years. When I was traveling, I saw the Pack play in New York in the '40s. Later after moving to Texarkana, I saw many games at Dallas. I can't drive in there anymore, but I am glued to the TV whenever I can find the Pack. I am only 86. Maybe I can still see the Pack win the Super Bowl.

Respectfully,
Hervy S. Franklin
Texarkana, Texas

Super fan Hervy Franklin.

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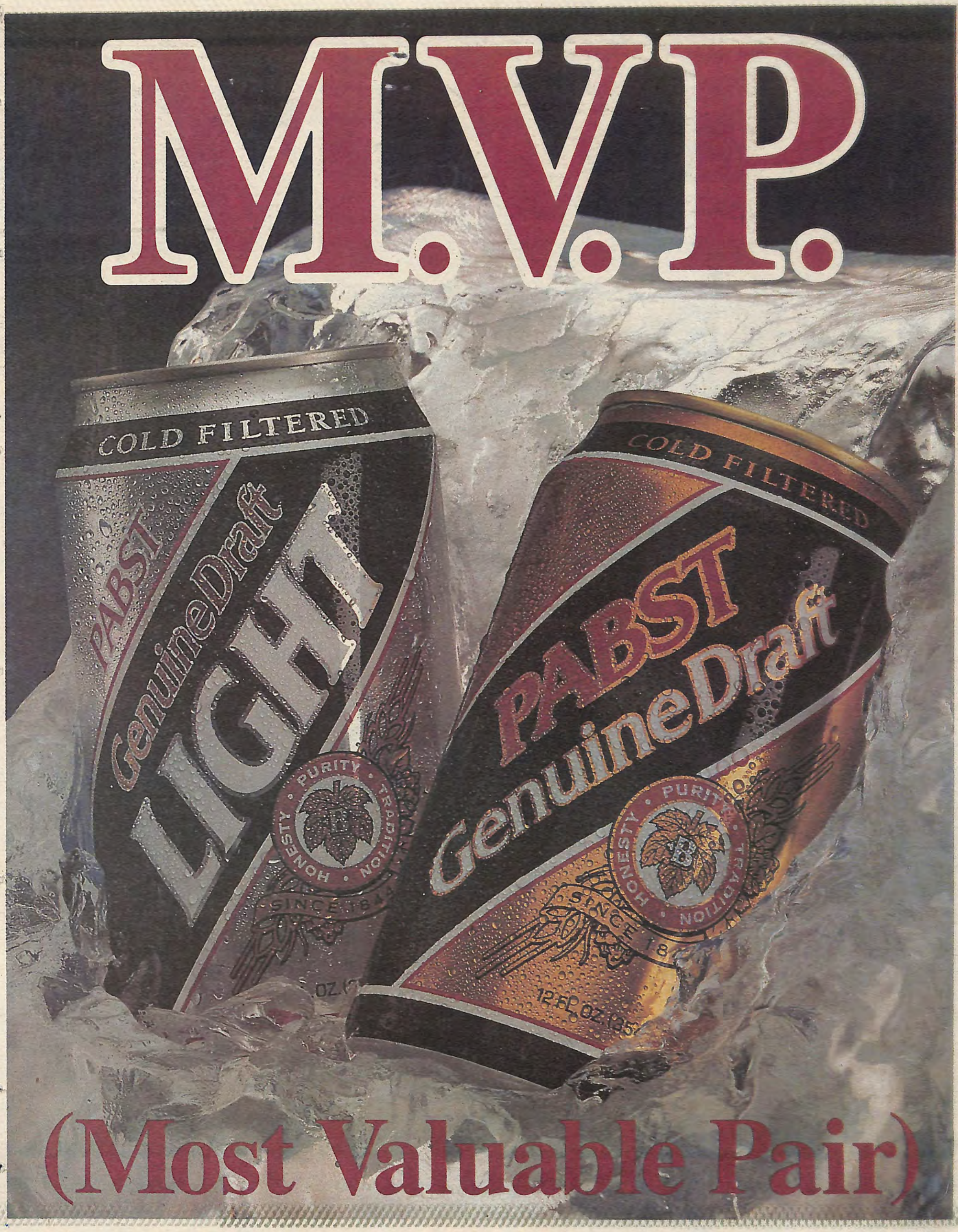

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